真・天地無用！ 魎皇鬼外伝

天地無用！GXP 2

梶島正樹

富士見ファンタジア文庫

イラスト 梶島正樹

"...??"
The rumbling of the ground that Seina felt with his body was getting bigger,
But by the time that he realized that it was something dangerous,
it was too late.

SHIN TENCHI MUYO! RYO-OHKI GAIDEN
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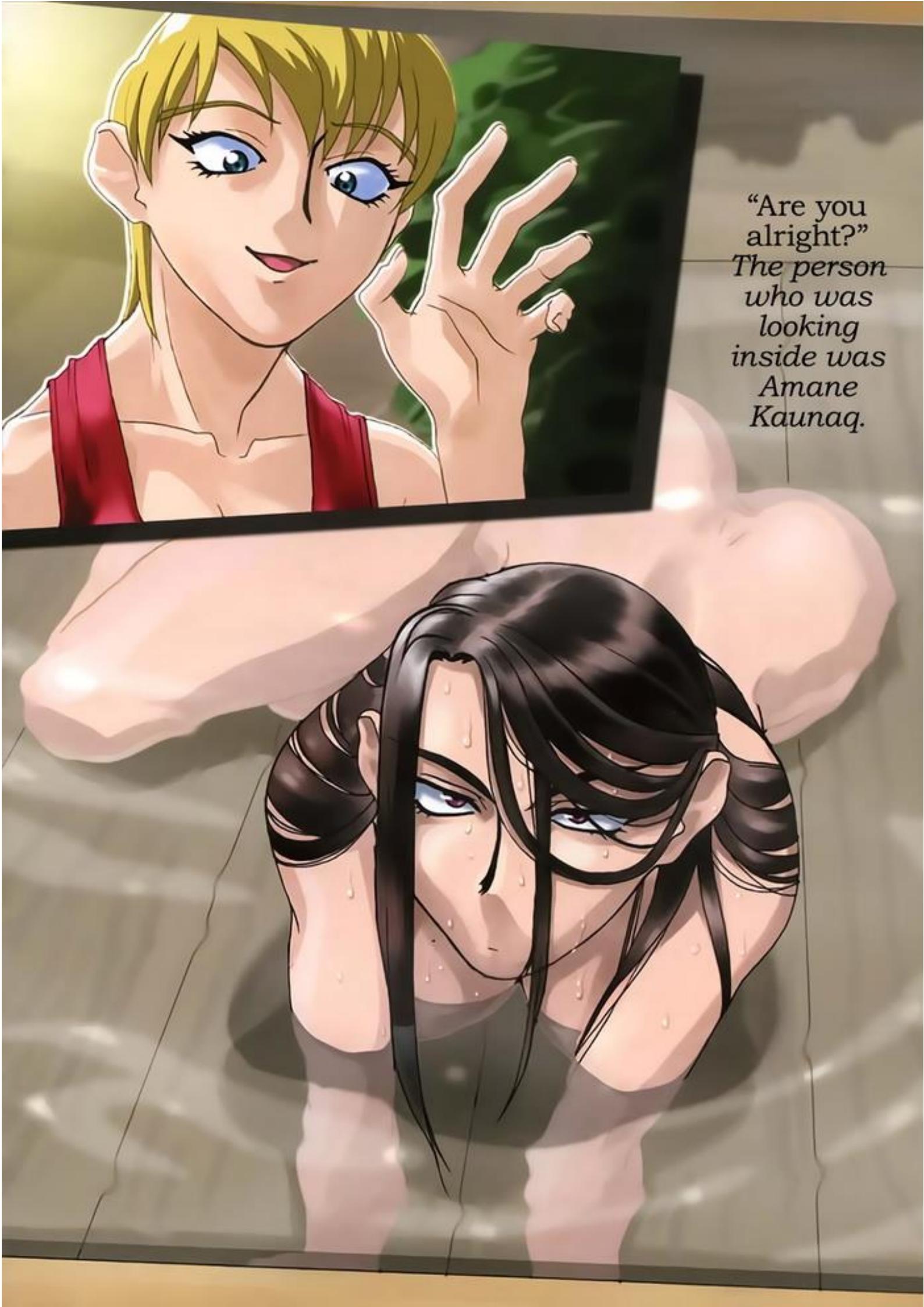
"You cannot be serious! To do nothing after being so indebted, as the Accounting De—no, as a Juraian woman, this is unforgivable!"
"Good for you!"
Seto opened a fan and spread a blizzard of confetti.


"Are you alright?"
The person who was looking inside was Amane Kaunaq.

Shin Tenchi Muyo! Ryo-Ohki Gaiden

Tenchi Muyo! GXP2

Masaki Kajishima

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Chapter One: Academy Dormitory

The boy's eyes were full of hope and shining brightly.

“…I've finally made it this far.”

The boy - Yamada Seina (Earthling) - was standing in front of the main gate of the Galaxy Academy GP Academy boys' dormitory, a place he had only dreamed of… No, a reality that surpassed even the grandest of dreams.

Moreover, this was not just an ordinary universe like any other. Seina didn't know it yet, but the Galaxy Academy where he was standing, trembling with emotion and feeling carefree, was the heart and brain of the galaxy.

It was the intellectual base of all sorts of fields, with the undeniable super geniuses known as Philosophers at its apex, and was a massive academic institution that trained the human resources to support them.

Furthermore, from that gigantic outer ring, a huge logistics network was stretched out like blood vessels to all the other civilizations! A place filled with all sorts of possibilities and opportunities, and at the same time, with potential destruction, it was truly a magical city known as paradise.

“…But even so…”

Seina, who had been excited, finally regained his composure and sighed with an anxious look on his face as he muttered, “Is this the GP Academy's… dormitory?”

Surrounded by a deep, dense forest, a building that appeared to be a dormitory could be seen peeking out from across the road, which was a little unsettling for a place at the forefront of galactic civilization and culture.

“…Do people really live here?”

The building itself was covered with giant ivy-like plants, which gave it the feel of Angkor Wat on Earth. The deep forest added to this feeling by creating a profound silence that made it hard to sense the presence of human activity.

“I guess it would be more accurate to call them ruins… but maybe this is what they call tradition.”

Many of the dormitories and buildings of prestigious schools were old. The issue was not the outside, but the content that was studied there. And there was another reason that was often overlooked - that the place was suitable for people to live and study. If a place produced many excellent people, then it could be said that it was a suitable place for that.

“There’s a saying that anywhere is a good place to live, and my house is pretty rundown anyway. Yes! This is the first step towards my dream!”

It didn't really matter if the building was old. He pulled himself together and was about to

take his first step towards the dormitory gate when…

“Huh!?”

—Clang, clang, clang, clang, clang, clang.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, a familiar sound like a railroad crossing alarm rang out.

“What?”

“...??”
The rumbling of the ground that Seina felt with his body was getting bigger, But by the time that he realized that it was something dangerous, it was too late.
RUUUUMBLE!
RUUUUMBLE!
SHIN-TENCHI MUYO!RYO-OHKI GAIDEN
真・天地無用!魎皇鬼外伝
天地無用! GXP 2
TENCHI MUYO! GXP 2

The usual Seina would have noticed, but he was so overwhelmed with emotion after arriving at the place he had always longed for that his brain's circuits of caution had frozen. Or perhaps he was in a state of danger inflation.

—Do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do.

“……??”

By the time he realized that the trembling he felt in his body gradually growing larger was dangerous, it was already too late.

A large group of wild boar-like animals, about the size of Shiba Inu, surged out from the woods around the dormitory with overwhelming mass, like a tsunami or an avalanche.

“Aaaaahhhhhh!”

Seina's screams, caught up in the rampage of feral ancient experimental animals, were carried deep into the forest as the herd moved.

To go into detail about what happened to Seina after that would turn it into a bit of an adventure story, so let’s just summarize the main points: First, Seina swam away from the stampeding swarm, clung to a convenient branch to escape, and climbed up a tree to check his position, where he was caught by another experimental animal (a carnivore). Just as he was about to become food for the chick in its nest, which was chirping adorably but was not at all cute in appearance or size, he luckily discovered something in the nest material that could only be a weapon. When he aimed it at the lab chick, it was quickly snatched away by the tentacles of the parent, and just when he thought it was all over, the weapon suddenly exploded, and the poor lab animal and its baby were transformed into a mute, gram-for-gram foodstuff. A hunter who had been chasing the experimental animals heard the explosion and arrived, and just as Seina breathed a sigh of relief thinking that everything was safe, the hunter (poacher) revealed his true colors, pointed his gun at him, and

demanded all of the meat. He was told that the experimental animals were protected and that their meat could be sold at a very high price on the black market, and that they were one of the Academy's three great delicacies. However, Seina said that he didn't really need any of it, so he'd give it to the poacher, but the greedy old man said, “There's no such person!” in a dialect that perfectly matched the situation and his outfit, not trusting Seina at all. He was about to be silenced, but luckily (?) the chick that was still alive swallowed the poacher whole with a nasty sound. As for Seina, the chick glanced at him, still looking unsatisfied despite having swallowed the poacher whole, and just when it seemed like it was all over, a GP officer who had been chasing the poacher rescued him and took the last chick and the poacher, who was still thrashing around inside it, to safety. He was told that they would be taking the other meat as evidence, but that it would be returned to him at a later date, but when he said that he didn't really care if he got it back, the GP officer said that they would sell it for him at a fair price, although they would take a 10% commission. He was told that, but weren't these important protected species? When he asked the GP Officer, he said it was self-defense. Since there was no other way to deal with the meat, Seina, who was about to be eaten, had the rights to it, and now you've got some unexpected extra income. He was thinking, “What's this?”, when the GP Officer suddenly left. When he realized he had been left in the middle of a forest, not knowing which way was east or west, he frantically ran in the direction the GP Officer had gone, but just then he was caught up in the same wild animal's rampage on its way home again, and ended up clinging desperately to the main gate of the dormitory.

“Ahhh… What a surprise…”

Meanwhile, while Seina was standing in the same place again in a battered state, on Earth…

“Wow… What a surprise.”

In his parents' room at the very back on the second floor of the Yamada store and home, Seina's younger sister, Yoshiko, was muttering the same thing as her brother.

“It's spectacular… isn't it?” His mother also muttered.

“～～～～～～～～～～～”

His father paced around the room in a panic, occasionally peering through a gap in the curtains to see what was going on outside.

“Why don't you calm down a bit?”

“Well, you know...”

Hokuto, Seina's father pointed to a huge pile of cash in front him, something he had never seen in his life.

His extreme panic made the way he obtained the money seem somehow criminal, but he didn't do anything illegal; it was just payment for legitimate work.

“It would be even more amazing if these were all 10,000 yen bills.”

“Hahaha, that's true.”

“Oh, don't say such horrible things.”

In contrast to his wife and daughter who quickly accepted the reality in front of them, Hokuto was still confused by the fact.

“Well, that's the sale for the day, so I guess it's no wonder Dad's nervous.”

Yes! It had been a week since Seina left, and Yamada General Store's fortunes had improved at an alarming rate.

Sales were doubling day by day, and coupled with large orders, the store was unable to store all the products so the sales area had expanded outside, and the day after the alley sale it turned into an open-air store using a simple awning, and today there were two large trailers parked next to Yamada Store, which until just now were the core of the open-air market, selling a wide range of items from fresh food to daily necessities.

“But what did Seina do?” Hokuto muttered curiously.

The reason for this expansion in sales was not just the increase in customers, but also thanks to a large sum of money that was transferred in the name of Yamada Seina a few days ago.

“How could he possibly make that much money in just a few days?”

“There's no need to worry. Kiriko said on the phone that it's okay.”

“Yeah… that's true, but…”

“Besides, there's no way that Seina, whose greatest asset was his earnestness, would do anything illegal, and even if that unlucky boy did something, there's no way he'd be successful.”

“But… on the other hand, that might just be bad luck.”

“Dad, you worry too much! And even if it seems like the worst case scenario, it was actually big brother who did it, and even if you have to give it back, you can easily pay back what you spent.”

Hokuto's cheek twitched as Yoshiko pointed to the pile of cash and casually dismissed her brother.

“Even after deducting that, we should still have enough for the next purchase.” Kyouko also added insult to injury, with a giggle.

“…That's true…” Finally, Hokuto made up his mind and muttered to himself.

“He's already a grown man after all…”

In his absence, the cut-off was as merciless as the parting of the fawns of a wild animal.

“That's right♡”

So what on earth was the money that was transferred to the Yamada family? The story went back to a few days before, when Kiriko was desperately chasing Seina aboard the GP ship.

“Oh, a bounty?”

Kiriko was on the bridge of a small cruiser, desperately tracking the GP ship's course, whose position was changing rapidly, and stopped calculating predictions of its movements.

“Yes, and I would like you to take care of it.” Seto said this on the screen, smiling broadly.

“Haa…”

There was no doubt that Seto has some kind of an agenda - but in the current situation, it was certainly appropriate for Kiriko to handle administrative matters such as managing Seina's bounty. Besides, pointless questions only gave Seto an excuse to play around.

“Okay then…”

“Wha… what kind of a joke is this???”

Her fingers quickly ran over the keyboard, opening a new, officially monitored account.

“Please transfer the funds here.”

As soon as she said that, the reward was deposited into the account and she immediately received an email confirming the payment.

“!!!!!!!!!!!!”

Surprised by the amount, Kiriko stared at Seto, who was smiling coolly from the screen.

“He, here, here.” Her nervous system was paralyzed and she couldn't speak properly.

“Come on, calm down.” As she said this, Seto looked at Kiriko with a satisfied smile.

She forced out the words that had been stuck in her throat.

It was no wonder Kiriko was surprised, because the amount deposited in the account was in the tens of billions of yen.

“Th-this…this…” Kiriko, pointing at the numbers with trembling hands and unable to focus, glared at Seto with deep, clear creases between her brows.

“Well, it’s a little low, but you see, our accounting department is reliable.”

“Hey… wait a second…”

The shock was so great that Kiriko's neural circuits froze again.

“Even so, they gave it to us pretty easily. They were happy that they had a huge pool of secret funds.”

Seto wasn't one to waste money, but she'd do it if necessary. And the money couldn't even be classified as a secret expense; it had to be generated through top-secret operations, which made things difficult for the accounting department.

“That's not what I meant! It's too much! Way too much! What is this amount of money?!”

Kiriko's breathless, rapid-fire delivery was like the roar of a car spinning out of control as it accelerated.

“Thanks to Seina-sama, we were able to capture the pirates’ ships. When we tried to arrest them using normal methods, we calculated the estimated costs for the intelligence department and the actual fleet operations, as well as the bounties placed on each pirate and the bonus points for multiple arrests...”

In contrast to Kiriko's excessive excitement, she said that nonchalantly. However, the content of what she said was even more extreme than Kiriko's excitement.

“!!”

Kiriko instantly understood what Seto meant and swallowed.

“This amount is… small, right? Hmm?”

She spoke in a calm but triumphant tone. Kiriko's car simply crashed into the Seto wall and came to a halt.

(It's true that a normal arrest is almost like a war, but even if we calculate the total amount of money on the bounties placed on the pirates according to the conventional calculations…)

“The bounty paid to Seina-sama will be increased by two digits… right, Kiriko-chan?” Seto

added, pre-empting Kiriko's answer.

"……"

Seto added further shock to Kiriko, who was already stunned by the huge amount.

"Furthermore, if we consider the estimated damage caused by the captured pirates this time, the associated damage, and the additional profits such as stock price increases due to the stabilization of the situation due to these roundups, all on a Galactic Federation scale…"

——It was a truly astronomical figure.

(And since it was Seto-sama, she must have extorted a lot of protection money from various countries and companies.) Kiriko thought as she looked at Seto's smiling face.

Judging from Seto's words, "a huge pool of money," the reward for Seina would be equivalent to giving a child's allowance to someone who had earned a national budget-level income.

"That amount is… small, isn't it?" Seto repeated it to make sure and then glanced at Kiriko.

"……Yes……" Kiriko nodded slightly, as if she had resigned herself to the situation.

"Well, the bounty paid by the GP and the Federation is not for Seina-sama's personal captures, so I'll put it in Jurai's treasury for now. I'm sure I'll be able to make up enough for that later."

But just the bounty was so huge, there was no telling what Seto might do to fully compensate — and in fact, anything involving Seto was bound to be trouble.

"Seto-sama, the reward amount is certainly as you say, but this amount of money will not benefit Seina-chan."

"That's why I'm asking you to manage it."

"Ugh! …But…"

To Kiriko, the amount of money presented was Seina's value. Normally, she should be unconditionally happy about it - in fact, in her heart, Kiriko was already happy about it as if it were her own - but accepting it would mean accepting that Seina had entered the GP. No matter how huge the amount may be, it was the price of Seina's life.

"Just because he receives this money doesn't mean he has to join the GP."

As if she could see Kiriko's thoughts, Seto said, as Kiriko fell silent.

"Seto-sama! I…"

"You're so serious. And clumsy… well, it's not that I don't get why you're so clumsy… hey ♡"

“Ugh!”

Kiriko tried to argue back, but Seto simply brushed her off with those words. Seto won with dignity.

“Seina-sama has joined the GP… No, you should discuss with him whether he wants to return to Earth or not. However, the reward is only for Seina-sama's past work, and it does not restrict his future. Besides, this should be enough insurance if Seina-sama returns to Earth and lives there, right?”

(!!……indeed……)

—What Seto said was true.

Shunned by high schools, Seina's bad luck was a big problem that would affect his future, even his old age. Hundreds of billions of yen would be considered insurance against such a situation, and would be absolutely essential for Seina.

But… Kiriko thought. (With all that money, what if kind-hearted Seina-chan gets tricked by bad people or women...)

The image of Seina staring in shock at his empty bankbook came to mind. It was a highly probable prediction of the future…or even a precognition.

(No, no! You're right… I guess I have to look after him properly…)

(!!)

For just a moment… Just a moment, Kiriko's words made her imagine herself standing beside Seina…and as a result, she had a vague recollection of a future where the two of them became husband and wife.

(What are you thinking?!)

She quickly dismissed the thought... no, she desperately buried it deep within her heart, plastering over it with the image of her younger brother.

(Even though I can't be by Seina's side anymore)

Kiriko desperately tried to dispel the sweet imagination.

“……”

Seto waited lovingly and patiently as Kiriko struggled.

“Okay. Leave the reward to me.”

A few hours after Kiriko said that, a fraction of the reward money, which could be justified, was transferred to the Yamada family's account.

Kiriko wanted to let Seina's parents know about his success. However, if she had transferred

the entire amount of several tens of billions, there would have been no excuse whatsoever… However, the Yamada family's values exceeded Kiriko's expectations, and even that amount was enough to cause a panic.

There wasn't much to say about the Yamada family after that. It was smooth sailing, just the usual story of success with a strong team, and the Japanese Dream according to the Yamada family standards was repeated over and over again.

Yoshiko said, “It's good that my brother is healthy and away from home!”

“…I've had a terrible experience.”

Whether he was aware or not that a farewell ceremony was taking place on Earth in his absence, Seina escaped from the Shiba Boar's rampage and, after checking that his surroundings were safe, slowly and carefully let go of the gatepost he had been clinging to.

“Oh dear… I just got this uniform… What's this?”

The wrinkles in the uniforms, which had been wrinkled and covered in mud, disappeared in the blink of an eye. It was like watching a video in reverse.

When he gently touched it with his hand, the mud dried in an instant and fell off like scabs.

“Amazing……”

Moreover, despite being mangled so badly, there was no visible damage.

“Although it looks similar to Earth's, the technology used is on a whole different level.”

Feeling a little happy, Seina deliberately got his clothes dirty with mud.

Just like before, the mud lost moisture, became crumbly, and fell off.

“Amazing.”

“What are you doing?”

A stern voice came from behind Seina, who was engrossed in watching his uniform clean itself.

“What!?”

Seina turned around in a panic and saw an elderly man standing in front of him.

“You're… Yamada Seina, right?”

The stern gaze of a homeroom teacher fell on Seina.

“Y-yes.”

“It's pretty late so I came to see… What are you doing?”

“S-sorry.”

He apologized and began to talk about what had happened up until that point.

“I see… so you were caught up in that. It's just as the report said.”

As they walked, he glanced at Seina.

The man was the Dormitory Manager, and he was now guiding Seina to his room.

“Well, since you had no knowledge of that, I’ll admit it was unavoidable. But what happened after that is the problem.”

“What happened after…?”

“What is your priority? Coming to the dorms, right? Not checking the functionality of the uniform.”

“Eh… Ah, that's…”

He seemed to be a very meticulous person.

(Like a homeroom teacher.)

It seemed that his first impression was correct.

“Besides, if you have been through something like that before, you should have recognized that it was a dangerous place. However, if you were distracted by other things and stayed there, considering your character traits, that would be a suicidal act.”

“Ah!”

The administrator was right.

(Normally, I would have run away from that situation immediately.)

It seemed he had relaxed with the joy of being in space.

“I'll let it slide this time since it's your first offense, but be careful from now on. This isn't a playground. Even if Kamiki Seto Jurai-sama favors you, even if you achieve great things.”

“Excuse me.”

Apparently the director knew about that incident too.

At this rate, everyone was going to know about his bad luck.

“Earning trust takes time, but it can be lost in an instant. Be careful not to undermine what you have worked so hard to build.”

The administrator's harsh words dampened the lighthearted mood that had prevailed until then. Although it was uncharacteristic of a teacher to be so blunt, Seina was grateful for the reminder to stay focused.

“Yes, sir. I’m sorry.” He answered as if talking to himself.

“Hmm.”

Seina's words of affirmation put an end to the Dorm Manager’s nagging.

“Whoa…”

It was then that he finally had time to take in the scenery around him.

From afar, the structures looked like ruins, but on closer inspection, it was clear that they had been maintained by human hands. The site, hidden in a deep, fortress-like forest, was much larger than one would imagine, and on the other side of a moat that was perhaps a hundred meters wide was a large park-like space with beautiful, geometrically arranged trees, stone-paved walkways, and waterways. All of the trees planted there were magnificently large, which made it easy to guess that the history of this place was very ancient.

“It's a little different from Seto-sama's Mikagami.”

Mikagami's residential area was different from the neatly arranged residential areas here, and instead took on the appearance of a natural primeval forest.

The administrator didn't scold Seina, who was looking around nervously, nor did he explain the facility to him, but just continued walking.

“Hey, here he comes.”

“Che… I can't lay a hand on him with the Dorm Manager here.”

"Calm down. It's not too late to do it once he gets to his room."

Just as the administrator and Seina passed through the dormitory gate, they caught sight of eyes gazing at them from behind the hedges and stone pillars in the garden.

(…Am I being watched?)

Other than the occasional student who passed by and bowed, there weren't many people to be seen. However, Seina, who had always been exposed to people's stares and was very sensitive to them, could sense the many eyes staring at him.

But the biggest problem was the fact that most of them weres hostile.

“Whew.” Feeling the pressure, he breathed a small sigh.

Even though he has been exposed to people's stares since long ago, no matter how much time passed, he could not get used to it. This was especially true when it came to the curious and the hostile.

(Seto-sama said I'd be welcomed, but I guess it won't work out that way…)

Despite feeling trapped by my usual negative thinking, he tried to change his mood and looked around again.

The dormitory, like the park area outside, was well maintained when viewed up close.

Many plants have taken root on the old moss-covered stones, and colorful flowers gave off a pleasant scent. There were small cracks, but no visible damage, and lighting fixtures that blended in well with the atmosphere, which were hardly noticeable unless one looked closely, gave the impression that this was a proper living space.

Just like inside the Jurai ship, the plants and buildings blended together in a good way, creating a pleasant space. Using natural materials to create an environment had been a tradition of the Academy since it was the Jurai Imperial Academy.

“Now, this is your room.”

The Dorm Manager stopped and pointed to a door with the number 193 carved into it.

“If you don't understand something, ask your roommates.”

“Yes. Thank you very much.”

“And remember that dorm life is also training.”

With that, the Dorm Manager headed back down the hallway.

“Training… maybe… Yeah! Let's do our best!”

He gave a small fist pump and suddenly looked at the numbers on the door.

“One hundred ninety-three…Room one hundred ninety-three?” ***I kyu san. His nickname from school. From the anime, *Ikkyū-san* (1975-1982)***

His right hand instinctively went to his shaved head.

He quickly shook off the unpleasant feeling he suddenly had and pressed the intercom button.

Woosh!

The door opened with a small air noise.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

A tremendous noise and smoke hit Seina.

(Explosion!?)

Seina reflexively jumped back.

(Is that the person who was looking at me earlier?)

He remembered the hostile gaze he felt earlier. Did they attack him when the Dorm Manager was gone?

"……Huh?"

However, Seina, who was on guard, noticed paper ribbons tangled all over his body and confetti fluttering down.

"Wh-what??"

"Welcome, Yamada Seina-kun!"

As the smoke gradually cleared, a voice could be heard and the figures of two people come into clear view.

"Welcome, my friend!"

Two boys looked at Seina with big smiles on their faces. A slightly tall, friendly, blond American-looking boy and a Wau boy with a puppy-like expression.

"Welcome, welcome, We've been waiting for you! Hahahaha"

The American boy approached Seina happily and grabbed his hand tightly.

"I really wanted to meet the hero who took down all those pirate ships. I was thrilled that he was my roommate!"

The Wau boy was wagging his tail and clutching his other hand. Seina was overwhelmed by the enthusiastic welcome from the two of them and just stood there in shock.

"Um… well… wow!"

Confused, he suddenly noticed that behind the two of them, at the entrance, people's faces were packed tightly from top to bottom, staring at him.

"Hmm? What's wrong?"

The American boy turned around at the surprised expression on Seina's face.

"Hey you guys! You shouldn't come out yet!"

“Yes, we are still in the middle of this historic encounter!”

The Wau boy deftly pressed the door open/close switch with his foot.

The door slammed shut, and the eerie faces of the sushi-packed people disappeared from view.

“Hmph! Just wait your turn.”

The American boy raised his middle finger – (Ah, so this is what we share the universe for?) Just as he was thinking that, the Wau boy opened his eyes wide and looked at Seina in shock.

(What's wrong?)

However, his gaze was subtly directed behind him rather than at Seina.

“Hmm?…Whoa!”

Behind Seina, a large group of boys' faces were clustered together and looked in their direction from the other side of the fence.

“You guys… this is the fifth floor.” The American boy said in shock.

The building where Seina's room was located had a cliff below, and they were clinging onto the other side of the fence, though giant vines provided a foothold.

“It's dangerous to be in a place like that…”

“That's not the point, Yamada-kun!”

A boy came and put his face close to him through the fence.

(Huh? What's with that look…?)

The boy's eyes was very hostile.

“I want answers about your relationship with Amane Kaunaq-san!”

“Huh?”

“Now, tell me the truth! What is your relationship with Amane Kaunaq-san?”

Hostility…no, it felt more like it was jealousy.

“No, wait! Masaki Kiriko-san comes first!”

This prompted a group of boys to jump over the fence and storm over to Seina.

“Hey, Yamada-kun! Do you have a photo of Ryoko-sama? You met her, right?”

The boys bombarded Seina with questions like fish in a fish farm flocking to food.

“No matter how you look at it, Amane-san is definitely more important.”

“These numbers are not something we can ignore!”

“Hey, Ryoko-sama's…”

“Stay away, pirate nerds!”

Both the Amane and Kiriko camps made comments at the same time.

“You guys are the same, you just have different favorite idols!”

This time they ignored Seina and started arguing.

(…Amane-san seems to be a celebrity, but…why Kiriko-san??)

Seina tilted his head, looking at the boys in shock.

“The person you fell in love with is different… I see. That's a reasonable opinion, but…”

“Right? Right?”

The boy on Ryoko's side seemed happy that his opinion was validated.

“However... the pirate woman is the enemy of the GP, so let's put off talking about that photo for now. Put it off!”

“That's right! You were bragging that you could get a photo of the pirate girl. One of your fan club members was the operator of the ship Yamada-kun was on, right?”

“That's true, but…”

The boy on Ryoko's side suddenly fell silent at what the other person said.

(Hmm? Operators… those three perhaps?)

Seina found the boy's expression strangely curious, but the other boys continued arguing without seeming to care.

“There's no point in arguing here. It would be more constructive to decide which one of us will be heard first.”

“Yes! That's right. The Pirates fans have also kept quiet…”

And then, it happened.

“Heyyyyy!! What are you making such a fuss about?”

He saw the Dorm Manager from before running towards them, yelling angrily. He suddenly

noticed that the boy who was a Ryoko fan was nowhere to be seen.

“Oh no!!”

The boys quickly ran to their rooms or jumped over the fence.

The crowd cleared, and the American boy and the Wau boy, who had been pushed out of the circle, ran into their room, dragging Seina with them.

“Haha. We've been set free thanks to the Dorm Manager.”

“That old man is useful sometimes, isn't he?”

As he watched the two of them laugh, Seina decided to keep quiet about the possibility that the one who had brought the Dorm Manager there might have been the boy who was the Ryoko fan.

“Hey, when everyone started running away earlier, I thought I heard some nasty noises and screams coming from the other side of the fence…”

“Hahaha. Looks like a few people fell.”

“They're clumsy.”

The two laughed, oblivious to the horrifying truth.

“This is the fifth floor! We have to help!”

“Oh no, wait, wait!”

For some reason, the two of them held back Seina as he tried to run outside.

“Just leave it to the Dorm Manager. That's his job.”

“Exactly. It's best to leave that sort of thing to the experts!”

“Aren't you worried? They're friends.”

Seina felt something was a bit off about the two of them being so carefree.

“Oh well, …… Seina doesn't know yet.”

“Kenneth, why don't you introduce yourself first?” The Wau boy interrupted their conversation.

“Oh no! They kept interrupting me! Ha ha ha!” The American boy cleared his throat lightly, smiled brightly and reached out his hand.

“I'm Rajau Ga Waura. Nice to meet you, Seina.”

However, taking advantage of his mistake, the young Wau boy snatched Seina's hand with a friendly look on his face.

“Hey Rajau! I'm the leader of this room.”

“There's no point in trying to look cool. In these situations, it's first come, first served.”

“That's not fair! Welcome, Seina. I'm Kenneth Bāru. Just call me Kenneth.”

Kenneth, the American boy, grabbed the hand that was shaking hands with Rajau.

(…They look like a comedy duo.)

Seina watched in amazement as the two of them shook hands as if fighting over his hand.

“Hello, nice to meet you. I'm Yamada Seina…Um, are you sure we don’t need to go and help them?”

“Don't worry, don't worry. If there's anything you don't understand, feel free to ask me anything. Ha ha ha ha.”

“So let's continue from where we were before…”

“Continuing from before…what was it again? Rajau.”

“It's about the team, Kenneth.”

“Oh, I see.”

(…It's a comedy routine…)

Perhaps noticing Seina's shocked expression, Kenneth cleared his throat lightly and said, “I'm sure the Dorm Manager told you, Seina, that living in the dormitory is also part of your training.”

“Yeah, he said that.”

“The three of us roommates are a team, and we have to always act together.”

“Are you always together?”

“Yes! That includes the toilet, the bath, and all the other things you can't tell anyone about!”

“Liar…”

“Yes, I'm lying.” Rajau butt in.

“…Huh?”

“Well, all kinds of problems are solved by a team. So that blunder that just happened has to be sorted out by someone on that team! And, well, the Dorm Manager was there too.”

“That's right. However, the team is not absolute. In the case of emergencies that we cannot handle, the administrators and teachers will help out, and the students will also form alliances in some cases, but these three will be the foundation, including the class curriculum.”

“So, normally other teams are enemies?”

“Hahaha. It's not that extreme. Most of the time, It's usually private matters that make enemies.” Rajau answered with a smile, as if to reassure the anxious Seina.

“Private?”

“The three members of the Amane, Kiriko, and Ryoko factions who were arguing in front of Seina-kun are a team.”

“Huh!?”

“Well, basically it's about taking care of yourself.”

“Yes, you wash your own pants. You lick your own ass.”

“I wipe it myself! By the way, Kenneth, can you even reach your own ass with your tongue?”

“I don't want you to lick it when it arrives!”

(…It's a comedy routine…)

At that moment, a ringing sound like a telephone rang from inside the room.

“Yes, yes.”

Rajau quickly took off his shoes, went up to the room and pressed the shiny part of his sleeve.

“Hey Rajau. Can you get me a picture of Ryoko-sama from Seina-kun…”

Click! The communication was cut off without a word.

Countless ringing sounds echoed throughout the room, and monitor screens filled the room to capacity.

“That's terrible… just hanging up like that.”

“Seina-kun! I want you to tell me about your relationship with Amane Kaunaq-san! Please answer honestly! What is your relationship with Amane Kaunaq-san!!”

“No, wait! Masaki Kiriko-san comes first!”

“Hey, Yamada-kun! Do you have a photo of Ryoko-sama? You met her, right?”

“No matter how you look at it, Amane-san is more important.”

“These numbers are not something we can ignore!”

“Hey, Ryoko-sama's…”

“Stay back, pirate nerds!”

It was a total repeat of what happened earlier.

“These guys…” Even the carefree Kenneth had his head in his hands.

“Well, at least Amane Kaunaq is a super famous person… so this reaction is understandable.”

“I guess it's better that there aren't any media people here.”

“The media?! Why?”

“You see, Seina…Amane Kaunaq is the daughter of a very famous brand and was at the very top of the top models. If the GP didn't censor the information, there would be a big uproar.”

“…Really?”

It made sense if he thought about it. Since he came to the Academy, he never saw any of those kinds of people, so he thought the media didn't exist here.

“Seina-kun is a hero who fought pirates, so if there were no GP restrictions, you would be in a lot of trouble right now.”

“……R-Really?”

“Kenneth-kun, what should we do? We could ignore it, but then that plan...”

“But if he answers every single one, he’ll be up all night.”

Amidst the din of phone calls, the two of them began discussing something loudly.

“Well, we have no choice. Let's decide the representative and hold a press conference. Then we can broadcast that…”

“Hey! Great idea! I'll take a cut from the viewers.”

“That sounds great.”

They looked like an Evil Magistrate and Echigoya. **(TN: A trope from Samurai period dramas.)**

“Okay, I'll handle the proceedings. Rajau, please prepare things.”

Kenneth's explanation seemed to convince everyone, and the clamor from earlier quieted

down. The issue of charging viewers was also resolved by making a portion of the fee a reward for the representative interviewer.

“Heh heh heh…”

The Evil Magistrate and Echigoya looked satisfied.

(Good grief.)

For the first time, he looked around the room, avoiding Kenneth and the others.

Contrary to the impression from the exterior, this room had the typical ultra-modern interior that he had seen so far. It was about 10 tatami mats in size. There were desks and three beds at different heights. The rest was a lower living room space with a table… That was about as far as he could see.

(Surprisingly, the inside is normal.)

“Yes, Seina's luggage and NB unit have arrived.”

“Huh? Ah, thank you.”

In the corner of the room there was a box about the size of a large clothing case with a GP mark on it, and another wooden box made of plain wood like paulownia, which looked luxurious, but seemed out of place in that setting.

“A crate?”

“That's amazing. This is the first time I've seen an NB in a special wooden box.” Rajau said admiringly, stroking the wooden box.

“It's like a luxury gift. Seina, open it now.” Kenneth also urged Seina on with an interested look on his face.

“Yeah… but what is an NB?” He asked the two as they peered inside while carefully undoing the fasteners on the wooden box.

“The official name is the Non-Brain Judgement and Investigation Unit. GP activities span all member states of the Galactic Federation, but the laws vary slightly from country to country and region to region, and are frequently amended. It's impossible to remember them all, so we use this kind of artificial intelligence as an assistant. In some cases, this AI will also be in charge of summary trials.”

“Wow… that's amazing… but if that's the case, does the GP really need people?”

“That's why it's non-brain, no brains required.”

Looking up at Kenneth's sarcastic tone, Seina opened the lid of the paulownia box.

“Wow!” Kenneth and Rajau both exclaimed in amazement.

“Huh? What?”

Surprised by their voices, Seina looked inside the wooden box and found a spherical unit about twenty centimeters in diameter.

“I've never seen one this small.”

“That's amazing. I can't really say for sure without looking into it, but it's completely different from what is generally provided.”

“I see…….” As he spoke, the pearlescent sphere made even Seina sense something out of the ordinary.

“AI-only units are quite effective in the early stages, but as they expand in scale and their activities become more diverse, they have many positive results, but at the same time, they also have some serious drawbacks. In the past, AI units with new systems and characters have been experimented with many times, but the results don't seem to be that different.”

“Well, in the end, no matter how much technology advances, common sense says that the most efficient way to do it is to have them assist humans or form a mixed unit.”

As they said this, Kenneth and Rajau carefully examined the spherical unit.

“The basic design is different from previous GP products…”

“Hmmmm… Seeing as it doesn't have the model number that is always attached to GP-adopted items, it's probably a prototype made by a faculty manufacturer or a private workshop. Seina-kun is an early civilizational person, so it's probably a special issue… But more importantly…”

“More importantly?”

“About this surface treatment…” Rajau stroked the pearlescent surface slowly.

“What about it?”

“There was something very similar in the collection of adult software that Kenneth ordered by mail order…”

“My… Why do you know that?!”

“Did you think you could buy it in my name and not get caught?”

“…I-I know I was wrong, but…you see…Rajau is considered an adult and we're a team after all.”

(I see. So guys buy pornographic books under a friend's name here too…) Seina nodded, impressed to see Kenneth looking completely red and upset.

“Well, we can talk about that later… Among them was the latest biometal created by a famous character designer at the Academy, right?”

“Ah, that's it. It's my treasure! It's great.”

“I’m not sure… But don't you think they look similar?”

“Hey Rajau! What's the similarity between her and this sphere?”

“I'm talking about the surface gloss!”

“……Ah!?” Kenneth shouted and froze, staring at NB.

“I thought that only Biometal could produce this unique shine?”

“…It certainly does resemble her… But that biometal consumes an immense amount of energy to maintain its shape! Do you know her height? 12 meters 22 centimeters! 12 meters 22! The receiver for hyperspace energy transmission, which can't even be done by wire, is huge, so in the end we had to incorporate an energy generator to achieve that height! We built everything to match her height, from the huge set to the bioroid actor and other actresses, so the production costs were on par with those of a small blockbuster movie, and even the software was only purchased with my own savings!”

“Kenneth… I don't care about the dirty details… but… if this shell is the one in question…”

“Oh wait a minute!” With that, Kenneth took something out of the storage closet next to his bed.

“Kenneth…what are those suspicious glasses?”

“It's like a party favor…” Seina muttered to himself as he looked at Kenneth in amazement, who proudly wore black-rimmed glasses with a mustache and a round nose.

“Hmm, so you think so too, Seina…”

“Yeah… anyway.”

“You guys don't get it. Listen and you'll be amazed! This is the filter that can distinguish the authenticity of biometal! Ha ha ha ha!” He laughed out loud in a silly outfit.

“So it's a filter to help you spot the counterfeit version of the giant robotic girl erotic software that Kenneth-kun bought under my name?”

“Is it something like those mysterious glasses that can remove the mosaic?”

“Seina, are there such erotic goods on Earth?”

“Yeah… Kai… a friend of mine bought one. It was a shoddy fake.”

“I see… eroticism is universal. So it's also universal that perverts get deceived when the blood is concentrated in the lower body and not in the brain, impairing their judgement.” He nodded, looking extremely impressed.

“How rude of you guys. This isn’t a fake!”

“I'm not saying it's a fake. But Kenneth, did you know that the manufacturer of Biometal offers a free downloadable filter software to help you identify it?”

“Huh?”

He must have been quite shocked, because even with his fake glasses on you could see his facial expression was tense.

“Wasn't it expensive?”

“……”

He didn't know how much it cost, but judging from Kenneth's dejected state, it must have been quite expensive. Seina was anxiously watching Kenneth, who was languishing in the corner of the room, while Rajau was running a filter software on the floating monitor.

“Are you okay…Kenneth?”

“This is also a chestnut blossom-like memory from my youth. Let's leave it alone.” His harshness contrasted sharply with his cheerful expression.

“You friendless bastard!”

“Haha, Kenneth. Have you recovered yet?”

“If I keep quiet any longer, I don't know what people will say. Besides, I'm going to get rid of all this stress tonight.”

“As expected from Kenneth. Yes, that is definitely Biometal.”

“Whew! This is amazing. This isn't just a prototype.” Kenneth couldn't help but whistle in amazement at Rajau's words.

“At least it's not a prototype for commercialization.”

“What do you mean?” Seina asked, sounding a little anxious.

“I mean, it's something at a higher level, like military technology development.”

In contrast to Seina's anxiety, his carefree tone made it seem as if it was nothing.

——What exactly is expected of me?

“Why would they send me something like that? And is it really okay to send something so classified to a place like this?”

“Hmmmm… I guess that's typical of the Academy.”

“Hahaha, as expected of the Academy. I can't tell if it's amazing or just sloppy.”

“Really?”

Well, there were otaku towns on Earth where they incorporated military-use electronic parts into toys and even sold those parts. The Academy was a place where they went too far.

“By the way, what is this Biometal? What does that mean, for example?”

“It's a metal with biological functions. To be honest, I don't know why it was used in this.”

“Huh?”

“What are you talking about! Look at this beautiful pearl luster! It has a fine texture that feels like it's sucking you in, and it can be shaped into any form and grow! It's truly...”

“It's the perfect way to create a perverted, sexy woman with special tastes.” Rajau continued with his harsh comments.

“I'm not a pervert!”

“It's meant to transform. Well, it's definitely a bit of an unusual hobby, but...”

“Oh, um, Rajau. I don't really understand what you mean…” He desperately tried to break into the two's special comic space.

“What do you mean by perverted……?”

“No, that's not it… I'm wondering why it's being used…”

“Oh, that's what you mean. It's exactly as you say, I don't really understand the meaning of using it for an NB. Originally, biometal itself was only useful as a temporary repair material... and there's no point in using it for an NB, which isn't even a combat unit.”

“Actually, it transforms into a cute girl.”

Kenneth's eyes lit up.

“Huh?”

Their eyes were naturally drawn to NB.

“It's possible.”

“Yeah!?”

“It appears to be a fairly advanced prototype, so it wouldn't be surprising if it had various capabilities added for functional monitoring.”

“To send such an outrageous thing to a mere student…”

(I think Airi-san might do something like that.)

Although she had only just met him, he was almost absolutely certain of this. As he thought this while gazing at the beautiful, shining sphere, a question came to Seina's mind.

“Hey Rajau. NB aside… why would you go to all that trouble to use Biometal on an actress?”

“I don't get it, dude. I think it's only meaningful because it uses the latest technology.”

Kenneth stepped between Rajau and Seina with a disgruntled look on his face.

“Well, it's a bit of added value. I watched it and it was pretty lame.”

“Don't you guys understand how good that is?”

“Um… I didn't see it…”

“Beautiful pearlescent luster, a fine texture that clings to the skin, the ability to change shape and grow to any shape… right? And it was made by a famous designer. It was certainly worth a look.”

“Yes, yes! You're right!”

“But that's all there is to it, and the performance techniques of the large androids are far from excellent.”

“Performance techniques?”

“In other words, she's a terrible actor. In the erotic genre, that's a fatal flaw.”

“I-I like the awkwardness because it's innocent!”

“That's why I said she's a perverted, erotic woman with special interests.”

“Ugh… I'll need to gather data on replay techniques now…”

“I heard the sequel has been cancelled?”

“No way!?”

“It was a good idea to use the latest technology and famous designers for an AV, but the production costs were too high, and the fact that it was unique even within the erotic genre caused it to not sell as well as expected. It would have had more potential to develop if it had been a promotional video for a new model doll, but since her first debut was erotic, it couldn't be released to the general public. In the end, they tried to make up for the loss with expensive related goods like party glasses, which were almost like a scam, but it turned out to be a drop in the bucket.”

“Th-That's not possible.”

That was the end of it. Kenneth collapsed in silence, like an overacting comic book character who had been hit by his rival at a baseball game.

“K-Kenneth?”

“No need for consolation. By the way, Seina, can I borrow this machine later?”

“Oh, is that okay?”

“Thank you! This might work… Hey Kenneth, tonight is more important than a big-name porn star, right?”

He showed NB to the depressed Kenneth.

“Yes! That's right!”

Suddenly Kenneth regained his energy and patted Seina on the shoulder.

“Now that the current issue has been resolved, let's move on to the briefing about this room.”

“Ah… Thank you, nice to meet you.”

The change was so quick that Seina wondered if his depression was just an act.

“Don't worry about it. We're a team. Ha ha ha.”

“By the way, Kenneth, I just noticed that the suspicious glasses you paid a lot of money for were also attached to this unit.”

Rajau took out a pair of mustache-nose glasses, similar to the one Kenneth had, from the wooden box the unit came in.

“By the way, this one has silver rims and the mustache is made of high-quality curled human hair.”

“…Um～～～～～Seina's desk and bed are the ones at the very front.” Kenneth explained weakly.

“The basic equipment that was in your luggage can go in a case in the storage area in front of your desk.”

Kenneth flipped a switch on the desk and a gaping hole appeared in what had previously been a blank wall.

“Here, leave this case here…”

Kenneth easily picked up the case from before and placed it on the arm sticking out of the hole. It fit perfectly into the hole.

“So that's how it works.”

“Kenneth… you're strong.”

“Huh? Ah, it's not as heavy as it looks. And these cases have a built-in weight reduction system.”

“Hmm… is it like a case with wheels?”

“Also, there is a storage space under the bed for personal belongings. …Oh, that's right! And if you want to concentrate or need quiet when you want to sleep…”

Kenneth sat on the bed, summoned the floating monitor, and began operating it. Suddenly, Kenneth's voice disappeared, and with the next operation, the bed was completely covered by a black force field plate.

“Whoa!”

“This will prevent others from seeing what's inside, so please use it according to your needs.” Knocking the force plate with the back of his hand, Rajau took over explaining for Kenneth, who could no longer hear.

“Hmm…”

However, the moment Seina touched the plate, the force field plate was suddenly released and Kenneth appeared with his bare buttocks exposed.

“Whaaat?! Hey Rajau, don't release it so suddenly!” Kenneth turned bright red and hurriedly pulled up his pants.

“What are you talking about? This can't be unlocked from the outside.”

“That's true… so maybe there was a timer on it?”

“Maybe so. But Kenneth… what exactly were you doing in there?”

“Well, I was trying to explain to Seina that he wouldn't understand if I did something like this.”

“…And so…” Rajau looked shocked and shrugged at Seina.

“Okay, next time. Next time!” Blushing, Kenneth yelled to hide his embarrassment and pulled Seina into the next room.

“This is the bathroom.”

In a space about six tatami mats in size, there was a familiar unit that was also found on GP transport ships.

“I saw this on a GP ship. Wow, it has a bathroom and a toilet. I thought it was shared.”

“Although it's called a bath, this actually involves spraying tiny nanomachines onto the body to cleanse it.”

When he opened the bathtub box, an empty space appeared, unlike the GP ship.

“So this is just a shower?”

“The unit you saw is a little different. If you want to take a bath, there is a large public bath, so please use that.”

“We usually use the large public bath as well. Well, this one lets you wash with your clothes on, so it's fine when you're in a hurry.”

“With your clothes on?”

“Okay, let's give it a try.” Kenneth happily pulled Seina into the box.

At that moment, Seina's hand briefly bumped the panel switch next to the door.

“And you lock the door like this…huh?”

The box vibrated ominously, accompanied by a rattling noise.

Rajau, outside, suddenly came to a realization.

“La-Laundry mode!”

Rajau frantically operated the switch.

The vibration stopped and the door opened.

Inside the box, Seina and Kenneth were spinning around.

“Seina, Kenneth, are you okay?!”

“…So, it doubles as a washing machine.”

“Yeah… I understand.” Seina stood up unsteadily.

“Wow… I’m wet… what?”

It was a strange sensation and sight. The water droplets on his skin were dripping down like living things, similar to how alcohol-based disinfectant evaporates and dries up in the blink of an eye.

“Are you surprised? That's the nanomachine cleaning solution. It dries your clothes in just a few seconds.”

Just as Kenneth said, the wet feeling disappeared quickly.

“It's kind of… a bit creepy.”

“Maybe that's because you're not used to it. But even so, why is it in washing mode even though someone is inside… is it broken?”

“I'll have them check it out later. Now, I think I've given you a general description of the room.”

“Not yet. We still need to register his personal ID for the door.”

“Seina, please place your right palm on this plate.”

A magazine-sized plate protruded from the door on the inside of the room.

“Okay.”

“Please wait a little while.”

Rotating lights flashed around the outline of the plate.

“What is this light trying to detect? Palm vein patterns?”

“We're searching for a partial genetic pattern. By the way, this light is just a signal that scanning is in progress and has no other meaning.”

“……I see.”

“Ha ha ha! See, you feel uneasy when there's nothing there, don't you?”

“Well… Do you think it's broken?”

The plate was stored in the door with an electronic beep.

“Okay, registration is complete. Let's go outside for a bit.”

Seina followed Rajau out into the hallway.

The door slammed shut and locked.

“It doesn’t matter what finger you use. Touch the door and it will open.”

“Um… like this?”

“That's right… Wait… what?”

Seina's fingers were definitely touching the door, but it didn't seem to be opening.

“That's weird, Seina. Please move aside.”

Rajau put his finger on it, replacing Seina.

…There was no response.

“Oh? What?”

No matter how many times he touched it, there was no reaction.

“What?”

Kenneth pushed Rajau and put his hand on the pad, but there was no response from the door.

“Hahaha. No problem! In this case, I combined my retina pattern, fingerprint, vein pattern and PIN code…”

A moment of silence passed.

“…No… it seems…”

The three of them stood there in a daze - or, to be more precise, Kenneth and Rajau were stunned, with Seina watching them - bathed in the setting sun.

“What a disaster…”

An hour and a half later, Kenneth and Rajau were slumped in the room.

“The administrator didn't need to get so angry.”

“Well, we had to break down the door and replace the entire entry unit.”

“Hahaha! I never thought they'd use military-grade shaped charges.”

“So the durability specs for the doors were not exaggerated.”

“But… I didn't realize not being able to enter the room would be such a shock.”

“If you think about it, a home is the foundation of life. It may seem like a given, but… Now that I think about it, you're surprisingly calm, Seina.”

Rajau looked quizzically at Seina, who sat uncomfortably beside them, slumped over.

“This often happens to me.”

“Oh really?”

“…I'm sorry. It's probably my fault.”

“…Huh?”

Kenneth and Rajau looked at each other after hearing Seina's words.

“I’ve had really bad luck ever since I was born, and I drag everyone around me down with it. So I think it would be better if I asked someone at the dorm to move me to a different room…” Seina scratched his head, looking a little sad.

“Ah, I see… So you're the type who has a probability bias, Seina-kun. That sounds interesting.” Rajau sat up, curious.

“Huh? But… on the way here, I specified a random jump route and attracted pirates, causing a lot of trouble for everyone…”

“Isn't that even more amazing?”

“That's right. I don't know about other places, but here it's a great talent.”

Rajau and Kenneth laughed nonchalantly.

“Thank you, Kenneth and Rajau. I'm so relieved.”

Although Seto had said that he would be “welcomed”, that only meant that he was useful, not that he would be accepted in everyday life. However, those words from the two of them may have been what Seina wanted most of all.

“Seina might be comparable to the Kuramitsu family.”

“Kuramitsu… Mitoto-san?”

“Hey, Seina, do you know Kuramitsu Mitoto?”

“Yeah. We were on the transport together.”

He remembered her friendly smile.

“Apparently, Kuramitsu Mitoto-san often goes missing while cleaning, and is found cleaning in the most unexpected places.”

“I often hear about the people who were cleaning with her and then disappeared.”

It was almost a ghost story.

“Ah! I see… that's why Onnainin-san stopped her cleaning in a hurry.”

“Then there's another person who's said to be the strongest… anyway, the Kuramitsu family seems to have a lot of probability biases like that.”

“Hmm… But with such power, you should be careful in other ways.”

“What do you mean?”

He looked at Rajau anxiously.

“The Galaxy Academy is a place where hobbyists from all over the galaxy gather together.”

“Hobbyists?”

“To be honest, they're nerds. Especially Philosophers… Well, you might end up being used as research material.”

“Research material?!”

“But Seina, if you catch the eye of a Philosopher, the rewards are great.”

“We'll be counting on you then. After all, we're teammates. Ha ha ha.”

“Kenneth, do you want to be the test subject?”

“I'll leave that to Seina. I'm the one who's getting something in return!”

“I-I see... Thank you... I'm glad.”

Kenneth told him how he really felt with a smile, and Seina sighed in resignation.

“Well, I'm getting hungry now, so let’s have something to eat.”

A screen appeared on the table, displaying several food menus.

“You don't go to a restaurant or anything.”

“We haven't started school yet, and our individual nutritional menus haven't been decided. So we'll start eating at the cafeteria once that's done.”

“Can you choose what to eat?”

“Everyone needs different nutrients, right? Everyone's build is different too. But don't worry, there's a wide range range of foods available.”

“Plus, the only time you have to undergo dietary control is when you're a student.”

“I see.”

“Let me explain with this menu. After you choose your main dish… you see, it will show you what nutrients you need to supplement your diet. The values shown here are general averages, but they are judged based on your own detailed data.”

“Hmm…”

“You can add it to drinks when you don't have much appetite or when you want to eat a lot.”

“I see… then,” Nodding, Seina chose a safe-looking dish that he had seen on the GP ship, because the seasoning of elaborate dishes often didn't suit Seina's taste.

“Hey, what's this mouth symbol?”

There were some lips marks next to the menu.

“Oh, it's a virtual taste experience.”

“Virtual taste?”

“Try touching the images of the dishes.”

Rajau suggested that he try one of the dishes.

“!!”

He hastily pulled his finger back.

“Wow… it really tastes good!”

“That's a fresh response, I like it.” Kenneth looked happy.

“For us, this is a completely natural technique. But seeing Seina's reaction like this makes me feel a little emotional.”

“I've been surprised by a lot of things before I got here, but this is something special.”

“Food-related matters have a big impact on everyone. The taste of virtual food also varies greatly from person to person and from region to region.”

“However, virtual reality experiences can sometimes be dangerous. They're now mostly banned, and this is all that remains.”

“Oh, so this is a sample… I guess there's no way I can go wrong with this.”

“It's tough when the food doesn't suit your taste.”

“…Ah!”

It was then that Seina remembered the most important thing.

“What's wrong?”

“By the way, where are the prices for this?”

There were no prices listed on the menu.

“I had completely forgotten about it because I had never needed it before I got here… I… I don't have any money on me.”

“This store is directly managed by the GP so there is no need for it, but… you have nothing at all?”

“Yeah… now that I think about it… I used a public phone too, but there was no place to put money or anything.”

“In that case, you can pay later using your ID.”

“ID?”

“Did you press your finger or hand on the application form?”

“Ah! I pressed it.”

He remembered his mother and sister teaming up to force him to press it.

“And that's how Seina-kun's ID was registered. Public phones also have an ID reader on the receiver, so that must have been how it was.”

“But… in the end, that's still debt, right? I can't pay it off right away, and I don't really like debt…”

“Once you start your practical training, you'll get a salary, and as long as you don't mind not being picky about the necessities of life, they'll be rationed for you. In the end, all you have to pay is entertainment expenses, and even if you do have to pay bills, there's a monthly limit, so it's not like you can't pay them off, so it's fine.”

“But……”

“Now, please put your hand here. Let's check Seina-kun’s current financial situation.”

A small plate appeared in front of an anxious Seina. When he placed his hand on it, data showing several items appeared.

“You can check your personal data here… it's like a personal household ledger.”

As instructed by Rajau, he opened the accounting section.

“Ah, the money has been deposited into your account, Seina… What is this amount?!”

“Huh!?”

As Rajau said, there were two numbers listed, but he couldn't figure out whether they were more or less.

“Is Seina's family rich?”

Kenneth, who was also peering at the screen, also seemed surprised.

“Wait a minute. The first one is from when you opened the account, probably a deposit from your parents... The larger amount is a deposit from the GP. Um... Seina, what is ‘meat sales revenue (tax and fees paid)’?”

“Meat sales?…Ah!!”

“…I see. The meat from that bird would be worth that much.”

After hearing about the incident at the gate from Seina, Rajau nodded in understanding.

“Hahaha. So, Seina is treating us to tonight's fun!”

“What are you looking forward to tonight?”

“Well, we'll find that out in a moment. But the charge for the public phone call you mentioned isn't listed… I guess the GP paid it.”

“I see… that's a relief. But how much was this deposit? I mean… for example, if I lived a normal life, how many days' worth would that be…?”

“Given the cost of living here, you could easily live on that for a year on your own.”

“A year already? That... that much?”

The poacher's sudden change in behavior made sense.

“Oh, here it comes.”

The food that had been transported was laid out in front of the three of them, and a delicious smell filled the air.

The three of them, forks and knives in hand, smiled.

“Let's eat!”

One after the other, the same dishes began spilling out of the teleporter plates on the table.

There was a bang, and the table was quickly filled with food.

“Hey, Seina…can you switch rooms?”

“Haha… Really?”

“But it's going to be tough to eat all of this.”

Seina didn't realize it, but the comedy duo was definitely becoming a trio.

Chapter Two: Black Shadow

The ship, which patrolled within the Academy's solar system, resembled a large greenhouse.

The glass structure that took up most of the ship's 200-meter-long hull was filled with trees, and a large obsidian plate that stood out from afar was the floor of the chairman's office where Seina and the others had been called earlier that day. The obsidian rock served as the roof, and below it was Airi's house, surrounded by a pond and trees.

“Whew…”

Airi had taken off her uniform and was now wearing just a blouse and pants, lying down on the sofa in her private room and stretching out.

Her mature body and beauty were enough to rival any Hollywood actress, “Let's get started!”

As she shouted this, she got up, sat cross-legged, and read the report submitted by her secretary with the pen of the terminal held to her ear, looking just like an old man reading the horse racing form.

“Airi-sama”

Mikami, carrying a tray with a teapot and cups on it, cleared her throat lightly.

She tried to caution Airi about her sloppy appearance, but Airi paid no attention and remained focused on her report. Normally, she would have offered a gentle rebuke, given that they were alone in a private space.

However, knowing that this report was quite serious, Mikami decided not to disturb Airi's concentration.

“Have you seen it?”

Waiting for the right moment, she placed the teacup she had filled with tea on the small table and called out to Airi.

“Yes.”

After reading the report, Airi picked up the teacup and took a sip.

“So that's what they mean by a chain reaction, huh.”

She breathed a big sigh and turned to Mikami with a wry smile.

“I never would have imagined that a near miss with Seina-kun's ship would uncover 38 new illegal intrusion routes… Now I understand how Seto-sama feels.”

“It's an incredible talent…”

It was a statement with some meaning.

“!?…Is there something you're wondering about?” Airi asked, noticing Mikami's tone.

“It hasn't been confirmed yet, but…”

“!”

Airi, who had been in a sloppy, relaxed posture, suddenly became tense.

When Mikami reported unconfirmed information, there was a good chance it was something pretty important.

“Based on the information we have so far, the Kuramitsu Intelligence Department is predicting the infiltration of several S-rank spies…” Mikami hesitated about whether to continue.

“…But what?…What…happened? Principal Mikami.”

Perhaps sensing the meaning of Mikami's hesitation, Airi slowly urged her to continue.

“AA33485 may be among the intruders.”

“What!!” Airi's eyes widened in shock…no, a mixture of fear and anger.

“…AA33485…” It was a number that Airi would never forget.

“No way… No way… Damn!” She forced herself to swallow the words she muttered.

Mikami's information network was that of the Kuramitsu family, rivaling that of Airi and Seto. Moreover, it was Mikami, not Minami, the head of the family, who held the majority of that information network. It would be foolish to doubt her and waste precious time.

“AA33485… Could it be that Widow is hiding in the Academy?” Airi's fists were white, her nails digging in and clenching so tightly that blood was seeping out.

“Yes.”

“Seto-sama told you to inform me?”

“Yes... She said you should be able to act rationally now.”

"……I see." Airi's fists relaxed as she heard Mikami's words.

The deeds of the woman known as Widow were all gruesome and tragic. She would change names, faces, and sometimes even her body, one after another, and turn the property, lives, and even flesh of all those she came into contact with into her own wealth.

However, she rarely gave direct orders or took action herself. Most of the time, she would just provide a small push.

[Pathogen]

Another name given to the act that took many lives with its powerful infectiousness. And those who witnessed many deaths in the end [Widow].

"Are you ok?" Mikami anxiously called out to Airi, who was pale as a ghost.

"…Yeah, I was just remembering something from the past." Airi gave a small smile and began to speak, almost as if talking to herself.

"You know about it, Mikami-sama, don't you? The incident that was confirmed to be what she planned..."

"Yes… Tens of thousands of Airai believers rebelled and committed mass suicide… Furthermore, their families, the urban colonies where hundreds of thousands of believers had barricaded themselves, were wiped out… And Airi-sama's father, who tried to stop the rebellion…"

"I don't know what would have happened to us without my Aunt Keira. In the end, that was the reason why Airai had no choice but to close its borders… Hey, Mikami-sama."

"What is it?"

"If… I had immediately called for help from the Galactic Federation… what would have happened?" Airi muttered while looking down.

"I agree……"

— Were the believers who disappeared along with the colony rescued?

—Were you able to capture Widow?

This was the possibility Airi was referring to.

However, the phrase "what if" could only be used as a basis for making decisions about the future. It was pointless to run away to possibilities that were no longer possible.

"I think it was the best decision for Airai."

“…I see… now it's my turn to make the best choice…”

[Widow]

She had the power to change the fate of a nation and even bring about its downfall. Her name was known throughout the entire galaxy.

(A legendary female villainess rivaling Seto-sama and Washu-sama)

An enemy who couldn't be captured while harboring emotions such as revenge.

(Are you calm? Are you okay?) She asked herself. (I'm not the same person I was back then, when all I could do was protect my daughter.)

She scolded herself for being weak.

(Right now I'm… Yes, the top of the Academy, Masaki Airi, a Philosopher!)

Airi confirmed her position and decided to confront her, unable to suppress her trembling. But it wasn't fear.

“Well! What should we do?” She said to encourage herself.

Airi had created a program to predict Widow's actions based on her incomplete criminal history data. She had tried applying it to the Academy several times... but...

“We can't use the Academy's intelligence department…”

The Academy was, by its very nature, a repository of rare and valuable information and a haven for corporate spies and criminals from many countries. It was said that if you went out into the city and randomly picked 10 people, you were sure to find someone involved in information gathering, whether legal or illegal.

“Right now, we don't have enough manpower to spare… and anyway, a major investigation would be noticed by Widow… Ugh!”

Airi, who had finally realized something at this point, looked at Mikami in a sulky mood - if Mikami had already reported to Seto, it was reasonable to assume that the investigation plan had already been decided.

“Well, I suppose it can't be helped, considering Airi-sama's past.”

“Don't bother trying to placate me… So, Mikami-sama, what plans have you and Seto-sama come up with?”

In a situation where they could not mobilize Airi's subordinates, they had no choice but to use Mikami’s or Seto's personnel.

“I have decided that my subordinates are not suitable for this plan either.”

“Not the right people for the job?”

“If we send in personnel from the Kuramitsu family, there's a high risk that the target will notice us.”

“So Jurai is still the only organization that can deploy the necessary amount of manpower in a super-secret way .....”

The Galaxy Academy's predecessor was Jurai's Imperial Academy, and even now that it was independent, Jurai's influence was still significant.

“Yes. Therefore, Seto-sama will be sending four of her ladies-in-waiting.”

“Whew. That's quite a bargain for... Widow, I guess that's what you get.”

Seto's Ladies-in-Waiting had a battalion-sized group of subordinates, and with four of them, it was obvious that the scale of the deployment was extraordinary, but…

“No, the one being dispatched this time is the [Sword].”

“The Sword… you mean, you’ve already identified your target?!”

Seto's Ladies-in-Waiting had two roles: Sword and Shield: combat and intelligence gathering.

“No, not yet.”

“What's the point of dispatching the [Sword] without specifying a target…? Seriously?!”

“They are Seina-kun's guards.”

Mikami, with a look of anguish on her face, quietly nodded in response to Airi's question.

“Due to the nature of the Academy, even if we dispatched four [Shields], the estimated number of Widow's targets would be in the hundreds of thousands. Even with Jurai… Seto-sama's elite troops, it has been decided that there is a high probability that they will become aware if they send in the necessary personnel to capture Widow.”

“Can we act rationally now .....?”

They were going to use that adorable, small animal-like boy as bait… Airi looked down sadly.

“And that's why we have the four Swords. If that doesn't work…”

“We'll use a lot of shields and, at worst, chase Widow out of the Academy…”

(TN: Excerpt from Widow's profile from 17.12
■Widow■
Her age, and birthplace is unknown, her appearance has been remodeled over and over and over again, she does not even remember what she originally looked like in the past, She is a lunatic who's only goal and pleasure in life is to kill everyone. She has no obsession for money, but takes it anyways from her victims as visible proof of her kills and to rob the families of their inheritances, she records the process of her kills and keeps genetic archives of the dead.

Like Seina, she has a biased probability, but it only effects other people, not herself, she uses it to cause psychic pollution based pandemics that chain react from small events, they involve many people, induce fighting and result in death, she can infect people with her own will. However, she actually does very little work compared to the magnitude of damage her influence causes. That is part of the reason it was so difficult for anyone to catch her.
The entirety of the craziness of the events of this novel can be thought of as a result of Widow's power. **End.)**

After dinner, Kenneth divided the living room into a field to create an impromptu broadcasting studio, complete with a 3D image reminiscent of a TV studio.

“Kenneth… what's this?”

Seina seemed somewhat uncomfortable being stared at by the large audience.

“Seina, you probably don't know this, but this is set data from a very famous, long-running TV show that's been on the air for about 10,000 years. Incidentally, the audience's visuals are connected to the people who are actually watching this broadcast.” He said as he happily adjusted the tasteless floral tie of his suit.

“That outfit… could it be…”

“This is the show’s host’s attire. Ha ha ha!”

“Hey Kenneth, even though it’s just a video, I get nervous when so many people are watching.”

“Oh! It's time.”

Ignoring Seina, who was looking at him pleadingly, Kenneth ran to the center of the stage.

“Alright! Let's start the real thing!!”

At Kenneth's signal, the lights came on and the audience began clapping along with the grand music.

“Whoa!”

The gaudy lights and the roaring noise made Seina instinctively cover his ears. Kenneth seemed to be saying something, but Seina could barely hear it.

"Yes~ dear student representatives. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to gather with us today... It is convenient for us to be there since we are all in the same room..."

“We don't have much time so let's get started.” One of the three 3D video representatives irritably interrupted Kenneth's greeting.

“Our guests seem a bit impatient”

The audience burst into laughter in response to his words.

(The variety and pattern on Earth is the same.) Seina thought as he began to calm down a little.

“Okay, let's start with the first person… please tell us your name and affiliation, then you can ask a question…”

Just as Kenneth said this in an over-the-top manner, the set and the audience suddenly disappeared.

[Thank you for accessing Tennan software's free trial version of “Top 100 Variety Shows” today]

A woman wearing a bit of heavy makeup appeared and began to explain.

“What? It's not the retail version?” One of the boys said in disbelief.

“Hahaha! Well, it's just an introduction, but it's a good atmosphere.” Laughing unashamedly, Kenneth erased the footage of the woman, who was about to begin a lengthy explanation of the software lineup.

“Okay, let's start with the first question.”

“I’m David Doma, the representative of the Ryoko Fan Club… Seina-kun… Please send me a photo of Ryoko-sama…”

“Hey! Ask him about that later in private!” A boy waiting his turn cut in line and yelled at him.

“Hey, David, you say you know Alan and his friends, right? If so, you must have a lot of photos and videos of them, right?”

“The Oyasama said that if I wanted to see Ryoko's figure, I had to show proof that I worship her…” (**TN: The founder of a religion. I’m going with Oyasama because Guru just sounds stupid.)**

“… Oyasama?… Proof??”

“Well, the bottom line is that I have to pay for it. Oh dear, a fan club turned into a cult group? Well, that's a common story at the Academy.” Kenneth explained to Seina who had a dumbfounded look on his face.

“That's right. Alan-sama used Ryoko-sama's portrait as a sacred object to establish a new religion.”

(I was the type that got carried away easily…) David's words suddenly reminded Seina of the time he met Ryoko.

“But Alan-san… didn't he criticize the fan club for monopolizing Ryoko-san's photos?”

“That's right! Within just a dozen hours of parting ways with you, Alan and his friends had gone from branch chief to president, expelled the people who had been monopolizing the Gohonzon **(TN: principle image, lot’s of Buddhist stuff here),** and finally unified the Ryoko fan club, becoming the Oyasama.” David said with an ecstatic look on his face.

“Heh heh heh. And now he's doing the same thing.”

“Don't speak ill of the Oyasama!” David glared at Kenneth and Seina from a monitor that stretched across the ceiling, overlooking them all.

“Don’t say anything bad about the Oyasama! Don’t say anything bad about the Oyasama!”

“Hey! If you don't have any questions, wrap it up now.” A boy shoved an angry David in annoyance.

“Okay then…” David's momentum suddenly slowed and his monitor screen became smaller.

“Hey, Seina. It was really thanks to the great efforts of our leaders that you were able to catch all the pirates in one fell swoop, right?” Although it was posed as a question, it was stated with conviction.

“Um… well…”

“If that's the case, the voyage record of the ship that Seina was on will be uploaded soon, so we can just take a look at that.”

As Seina hesitated, Kenneth interrupted him, wanting to quickly reach a conclusion.

“What?! But that might be twisting the truth…”

“Seina, is what this guy is saying true?”

“It was Jurai's fleet that wiped them all out, so it doesn't mean I did it…”

“The Oyasama was the one who set the course for the random jump!”

“Really?”

He had a bored look on his face and spoke in a formal tone.

“That's… I did that.”

“Y-You're kidding!”

“If that's what you think, then you're wasting your time listening!”

Kicking the Ryoko fan boy out of the way, the next boy in line was projected.

“What are you doing?”

“Any more questions? Okay, done!”

“If you had a question, you would have asked it by now!”

“In the end, all you want to know is whether or not Seina has a photo of the pirate girl!”

“Th-that's…”

It seemed like an argument broke out on the other side of the screen, but David quickly ran away crying.

“Hmph! The cult is holed up in their stinky inner universe. I'm next!”

Behind the boy, who was sitting happily in front of the screen, David could be seen crying as he crawled into a covered bed.

"Ha ha ha. He’s literally caged in his inner universe."

“Kenneth, get out of the way!”

“Haha, my bad.” He pulled his face away from Seina's shoulder.

"Are you sure? I think he 's crying. ....." Seina said to the boy who took his place.

“Don't worry about it, it's the same as always. Anyway, I'm Elroy Egasu, the secret Kiriko-san fan club representative! Come on, I want you to tell me everything about your relationship with Masaki Kiriko-san!”

—Wham!

Suddenly all the lights went out and it was pitch black.

“What? What happened?!”

It was so dark that he couldn't even see Kenneth standing up in a next to him.

“Looks like a power outage”

The field he was in charge of seemed to have disappeared and he could hear Rajau's voice.

“Hey Rajau, did you do something wrong?”

"I don't think so. Maybe it's that thing with Seina-kun?"

"I see. ..... That's fine then. That's better than a mistake on your end."

“That's right. We need to get it restored soon or we won't be able to continue our work.”

“That's weird. It doesn't even switch to auxiliary.”

“May I take a look?”

“No, I'll go. When the power comes back on, I'll ask you to reset the system.”

That was the moment when Kenneth's presence disappeared.

“Seina-kun!”

In the darkness, a single monitor appeared.

“Is he back? Hey Rajau…”

Looking back, Seina noticed that a secret field had been set up there.

“Seina-kun!”

Hearing that voice, he finally noticed Airi appearing on the monitor… or rather, it was a time lag caused by Seina's desire to escape.

“Airi-san….wow!!” He quickly turned his face away.

“Excuse me. Why are you looking at me and then turning your face away?”

“Airi…where are you calling from?”

“The Bath♡” Airi, completely naked, flushed cheeks and a seductive voice, declared.

In other words, the time lag mentioned earlier was a desire to escape from what was to come.

“Please put on some clothes.”

“Oh, Seina, do you take a bath with your clothes on?”

“I don't, but I do wear clothes when I'm talking to people.”

“It's just you and me, you don't have to be so formal about it ♡”

“……”

It seemed like there was no point in asking any more questions to someone who was completely aware of what they were doing. Since he didn't have the time or experience to brush off Airi's flirtatious jokes, he could only ignore her to the extent that he don't offend her.

“By the way, is there anything I can help you with?” Seina said, as he turned hisr back to the monitor showing Airi.

“I don't like things that are too formal, but…”

“Can I help you with something?” He ended up shouting out to interrupt Airi.

“Yeah… I forgot.” The monitor with Airi on it came around in front of Seina, speaking in a slightly angry tone.

“!”

Seina's face turned red and he quickly turned away. (Damn, did I make her angry?) But it was too late - normally he was confident in his resistance to trouble, but he was a complete amateur when it came to dealing with women. His shame had made him lose his ability to make calm judgments, and he ended up responding carelessly.

“The truth is…” Airi’s monitor kept chasing him.

“Just a little bit.”

“Ugh!”

“I have a question for you Seina.”

“!”

“There's something I want to ask you.”

“!!!”

“I have something to ask you.”

“Please stop this!!”

Even though he brought this on himself, he finally reached his limit. Seina glared at Airi, breathing heavily. However, Airi must have wanted to see this reaction.

“Oh… don't stare at me like that… no…” She looked away shyly, but her cheeks were flushed with joy.

Airi's bold personality and her manly tendencies meant she had a real blemish on her face, what was worse was that she knew perfectly well how to hide it.

“No… I'll take it this way…”

Seina went completely limp and collapsed on the spot.

"I don't know what caused it either! If you want to complain, tell Kenneth!"

Elroy was pounding away at the keyboard on the communications monitor as he struggled to deal with the complaints from viewers coming in from all over the place.

“Damn! What the hell is going on?”

“Hey Elroy, the lights are out in Kenneth's room.”

Looking out the window, the boy who was an Amane fan called out to Elroy.

“What's going on? Maybe an electrical problem?”

“Maybe. They had some trouble with the door authentication this evening, so maybe the unit in that room is starting to wear out.” He spread his arms in an exaggerated manner and posed as if he is sighing.

“Tch… I wanted to get this done while David was caged up.”

“The damage is pretty bad this time, so he won't even show up for roll call.”

“But when he does come out, he's going to be really noisy.”

They both glanced at David's field-covered bed.

"Sniff... Damn... Everyone's being fooled... And I'm trying so hard to teach them..." David was lying under his covers on the bed, crying.

“I went to the trouble of warning you…”

“It takes courage to admit the truth”

“Wha-who?”

He sat up in surprise at the sudden voice that echoes across the field.

“Hello David.”

An image of a woman with a bright smile appeared on the screen in front of David.

“Ah… you are…” David recognized the woman. “You are… Oyasama’s… secretary.”

“Hey, Seina-kun. Seina-kun…”

Airi’s monitor was bouncing around Seina, who was slumped over.

“Come on! Are you listening, Seina-kun?”

“……”

He was too tired to even respond.

“You're ignoring me. Then go to …….”

“Whoa!!”

Airi’s monitor suddenly disappeared, and the next moment, Seina jumped up.

“What?! Why?! Wow! I can see it even with my eyes closed!!”

Even if he looked away, rubbed his eyes, and blinked repeatedly, he could still see Airi, as the image from the communication was being sent directly to Seina's optical nerves.

“Hey, Seina-kun.”

Airi's expression was triumphant, her eyes like a praying mantis that had caught its prey.

“When you talk to someone, make sure you look them in the eyes, look at their body, and then…”

The image of Airi, who appeared to be completely naked, gradually moved from her face down, as if in sync with her words.

“Ahhh! Please stop! Airi-san, Airi-san, I can see it, I can see it, stop it!”

“Hehe… It's okay! I've polished it and made it nice and clean ♡”

No matter how much he squirmed, no matter what he did, even if he closed his eyes, he could still see it, which was hellish. Normally, it would be a pleasure to see a beautiful member of the opposite sex naked, but for an innocent boy, being suddenly forced to do so was terrifying. Her charm was a powerful drug for Seina. No matter how much her personality had turned into that of an old lady… no, no, an old man, her appearance was that of a beautiful woman.

Moreover, just like Seto, she was the type of person who had an aura that attracted people.

“Stop it!”

Seina writhed in agony in the hell known as heaven - and then, that moment came.

“Isn't that enough already?” Suddenly, Mikami appeared on the screen, obscuring part of Airi's body.

“Hey! I was just getting to the best part, don't interrupt me!”

“Airi-sama, going any further than this would be a crime.”

“What?! It's okay because we both agreed.”

Even Mikami looked dumbfounded at Airi, who told a big lie as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

“No matter how you look at it, it doesn't look like that at all… But we don't have much time. If we don't do something about it, the security will get suspicious.”

“Tch! What is it?”

Airi clicked her tongue and turned away. At the same time, Seina closed his eyes and the image disappeared.

“Principal Mikami… Thank you.”

With the monitor floating before him again, Seina kneeled down and thanked his savior with tears in his eyes.

“Oh dear.”

Mikami couldn't help but chuckle wryly at the exaggeration, but then quickly turned to Seina with a serious expression.

“Seina, has anyone ever explained to you that you should not speak about Earth… especially the Masaki family?”

“Huh!?… No… Um… That's…??”

He had no recollection of that at all - that was written right on his face.

“Hmm… I thought so. I was sure someone had explained it to you…”

Seeing Seina's tell-tale expression, Mikami put her hands to her temples and sighed deeply.

“Um… by Masaki family… do you mean Tenchi-senpai or something?”

“If it was just Tenchi-san, it wouldn't be a problem… But Amane let it slip during the day, too.” Mikami smiled with a troubled look on her face.

“The ones I am particularly concerned about are Yosho… or should I say Katsuhito-sama? And the people who live in the Masaki household, Masaki Aeka Jurai-sama, her sister Sasami-sama, Ryoko-san, and Hakubi Washu-sama.”

“The problem… What is it?”

"As you may have heard, Yosho-sama, Aeka-sama, and Sasami-sama are officially listed as missing. I don't have time to go into details right now, but Ryoko-san and Washu-sama are also missing. Only a few people in the GP and the Jurai royal family know that they are on Earth."

“And you, you.”

Airi had either recovered from her sulkiness or thought of a new strategy, but she barged into the conversation wrapped in a bath towel. Her breasts looked so big they were about to spill out, and she looked even more erotic than before, so it was probably the latter.

“S-sorry. I didn't know.”

He apologised and looked away. This time, perhaps because Mikami was there, the Airi monitor didn't follow where Seina was looking - but she seemed satisfied with Seina's

reaction and had a grin on her face.

“It was my mistake, so it's not your fault, Seina-kun.”

"It's not Principal Mikami's fault. It's everyone's responsibility except for the reluctant presumption... Seina-kun."

Her tone was decent, but her pose is like that of a gravure idol. **(TN: a type of Japanese model, typically young women, who pose in suggestive, but not nude, photos in magazines, photo books, and DVDs.)** And it was quite risqué.

“Airi-sama, I'm sorry…?”

Mikami saw Seina blushing and looking to the side, and at the same time realized the reason why.

“Oh dear.”

As before, Mikami’s monitor covered Airi's chest area.

“Seina-kun, remember this. Currently, officially, Kiriko and her family, that branch family of the Masaki family, are descendants of the younger sister of the current First Empress of Jurai.”

“First Empress?”

“She was the first Earthling to go into space.”

“Oh, now that I think about it, Seto-sama said there was a precedent… perhaps…”

“Yes. So be careful with what you say in your interviews about Kiriko and Amane. Don’t talk about Tenchi and the others.”

“I understand.”

“I'm counting on you.”

Seina replied with a satisfied smile, and the monitor showing Mikami went black, hiding Airi's breasts.

“……Um……is there anything else I can help you with?”

Mikami has disappeared, but Airi was still gazing at Seina with something she wanted to say.

“Hey, how did you like my naked body?”

“Ugh!”

“You watched it until halfway through, right?”

Those expectant eyes were waiting for Seina to say something, and even Seina, who was a

novice when it came to dealing with women, could easily imagine what was going on.

—It seems like nothing can be resolved without saying those words…but.

Seina hesitated to say it, but there was no time to hesitate. If he waited too long, there was no telling what nasty force an upset Airi might use.

“It was so… beautiful”

It was extremely embarrassing to say to a half-naked woman, and even made him feel self-loathing. But he had mustered all his strength and effort to say those cheesy lines. Even Seina, who never gave up even in the most serious of troubles, felt incredibly tired at this moment.

“Thank you, I'm happy.” Airi, smiling and flushed, was so cute it was infuriating, even to the young Seina.

If it was to see that expression, he would go to any lengths to see it - surely any man would feel that way. But the process leading up to it seemed far too forced and artificial.

(I thought this person was married? No, no, before that, I met her daughter…)

He remembered the look of joy on Airi's face when he told her about the Earth Priest (Yosho), and the look of a mother on her face when he told her about Minaho. It wasn't the look of someone who was unhappy with her husband or family.

(So… is this a form of harassment?)

However, there is a high chance that the only ones who would hear it would be the snakes in the bushes. All he ccould do was wait patiently for the storm to pass.

“Oh, that's right! I have an update about the Ryoko fan club. Want to hear it?”

With only a lingering feeling of embarrassment, Airi's carefree expression seemed to have completely changed.

(But it would be troublesome if the dubious aftertaste was dragged out for too long...)

It was also true that he was intrigued by the information from Airi.

“What's happened?”

“A coup took place just a few minutes ago, and the three leaders of the cult were exiled.”

“Exiled? Are you talking about Alan-san and the others?”

“Yeah. Haha, they must have done something pretty nasty.”

“Wow… that was quick.”

Just when he wondered how far they would go in their evolution, it seems they quickly

headed down the path to extinction.

“Then let's talk alone next time♡”

Leaving behind those terrifying words… a sort of curse, Airi disappeared. At the same time, power was restored.

“Now, let's get you to confess everything about your relationship with Masaki Kiriko-san! When did your relationship start?” A tittering voice asked, with a reduced sense of urgency.

“I feel like it would kind of kill the momentum if Kenneth said that.” The boy from earlier, Elroy, said resentfully.

“Come on, tell us your story!” Elroy slapped his cheeks like a fighter would do before a match, and, instantly fired up, shouted at Seina.

(I have to be careful not to mention Tenchi-senpai.)

He tried to calm himself so as not to get carried away by the momentum. However, he felt a lot less pressure than he had felt during his conversation with Airi earlier.

“Ummm… Kiriko is the older sister of a friend of mine from kindergarten, and she's been helping me out for a long time.”

“Oh! So you're childhood friends…”

“Yes.”

Unlike with David, this was starting to feel more like an interview.

“How long did you take baths with her?”

“…Until about age seven.”

“So have you slept together?”

“Together, I mean… usually with Kai.”

Who's Kai?”

“He's Kiriko's younger brother. He's the friend I mentioned earlier.”

At first glance, they asked pointless questions over and over, but it was a type of leading question. If he wasn’t careful, he’d end up saying unnecessary things.

(I have to answer at my own pace…)

—Kai became friends with Seina, who was unlucky and isolated at kindergarten.

—Kiriko loved him as a younger brother, just like Kai.

As the interview progressed, Elroy began to tear up — though he was clearly more touched by Kiriko's kindness than feeling any sympathy for Seina.

“By the way, what do you think of her?”

“!!”

Seina's expression became tense with tension.

This was definitely the most important thing for them. Elroy's entire body was filled with a sense of urgency that he had never felt before, even though he was trying to appear calm.

(What do I think of Kiriko-san? Of course…)

But in this case, the correct answer was - how could he say it in a way that caused the least amount of damage?

“I… care about Kiriko-san…”

“About Kiriko-san?” Elroy echoed the answer.

—I love… Kiriko-san…

No matter how dangerous it may be, he could not lie to this feeling… but…

“I think about Kiriko-san…”

“What about Kiriko-san?” Interviewer Elroy's eyes grew grim.

“About Kiriko-san…”

“What do you think?”

There was clear irritation in Elroy's expression, and a wave of resentment from the many viewers watching the broadcast washed over Seina.

“I've always thought of her as my older sister…”

“I see!” Elroy's tension eased and a look of relief appeared in his eyes.

(…Phew…) Seina sighed deeply.

(Why couldn't I just say I love her?)

— Is it to protect myself?

(No… my feelings for Kiriko-san are more important than my own safety.)

—But being in the Academy means going against Kiriko-san, right?

(…In the end…did I choose my dream over Kiriko-san?)

—What do you think about Kiriko-san now?

(……)

It was still difficult for Seina, who had only just begun to become independent, to find the answer to that question by himself. Moreover, the situation around him was too raw and noisy for him to examine his own naive boyish psychology.

“Isn't it too early to feel relieved? Witnesses say he and Amane were having a very flashy lovers' quarrel.”

A boy who was a fan of Amane couldn't help but interfere. For him, it would be better if the Kiriko♡Seina pairing, which was the easiest to get together, were to be made.

“You've been listening to what I've been saying so far, haven't you? Kiriko-san is worried about Seina-kun, who is like a brother to her… but what about Amane Kaunaq?”

"According to our analysis, he was only teasing Masaki Kiriko, who has a crush on Seina-kun!

"So does that mean she's going to put her arm around him, rub her cheek against his, and hug him in public?"

“Noooooo!!”

It seemed like he had been hit right where it hurt.

“She said she would teach him everything, from start to finish.”

“Nnnnnnnnn…Seina! You…”

(I guess the blame is on me after all.) When Seina let out a small sigh…

“Hey, I told you to introduce yourself first, right?” Kenneth skillfully played the role of interviewer.

“Representative of Amane Kaunaq's fan club! Fingu Fox! Come on, spit it out!”

“Hey, spit it out! That's not a question.”

“Kenneth, stay quiet! Come on, Yamada Seina, tell me the truth! Look me in the eyes!” The Fingu monitor suddenly became enlarged.

“You eyes are bloodshot”

“Exactly! Don't embarrass me when I look at you with such blazing red intentness!”

Not minding Kenneth's light joke, he approached Seina with an almost sweltering heat.

“Ah… Amane-san…!”

Overwhelmed by the force of it all, he tried to speak casually but stuttered in a panic.

(This is bad! Now that I think about it, the place and the way we met were the worst possible circumstances.)

In this murderous atmosphere, even if they were in a life-saving operation or while he was unconscious, if they found out that they had kissed, there would be no guarantee of survival. No…more than that, he was more afraid of how Chairman Airi would react if he revealed the truth about Tenchi. He had a feeling that he would be dragged into a situation where he couldn't escape in many ways, and his body and mind would be torn to shreds.

(To let such a wild animal run free.)

If he ever returned to Earth, he would have to give the priest a lecture for an hour or so.

“Hey! If you keep quiet, no one will understand!” Fingu yelled in frustration and glared at Seina with an angry look on his face.

(But… Airi's serious eyes are way more terrifying than that…)

Remembering Airi gave him some peace of mind.

“Well… Amane… Yes! I met her for the first time at Kiriko's house and she gave me a pamphlet. She seemed to be happy because she got points for recruiting someone…”

“I see! You'd be happy if the person you introduced you to did something great! I'm sure your childhood friend seems a lot more suspicious than Amane, who you've only just met.”

It may seem like he managed to get around it skillfully, but he was also helped by the evil escapist mentality of distorting what the other person was saying to suit his own convenience.

“What?! It's way more suspicious to see someone just taking your arm, rubbing your cheek, and hugging you in public after just meeting you, and then trying to hold you by the hand from start to finish!”

Now that the necessary information had been gathered, the discussion seemed to move on to discussion among the fans.

“Hey, it's almost time for roll call.” Kenneth seemed to feel the same way and called the interview to an end.

“What?! That's bad!”

One by one, the monitors disappeared, as if they are running away.

“Let's continue this here tomorrow night.”

“That's what I want!”

That's when he thought, (He's making decisions that I don't like.)

“You guys do that by yourself. I think I've asked everything you wanted to know.”

“Hey Kenneth!”

“Any more than this is an invasion of privacy.”

Bam! Without further ado, Kenneth shut down the call.

“Rajau. How is it going?”

“OK. All you have to do is start up the NB and transfer the data.”

“Whew…”

Freed from the hustle and bustle, Seina sighed softly and looked out the window. Before he knew it, the outside was enveloped in pitch black darkness, and the deep forest swallowed up the noise, creating a deep silence.

“?”

If he listened carefully, he could hear the tingling of electronic sounds ringing out from all over the stylish antique wood and brick building.

“Here it comes!”

Seina turned towards Kenneth's voice, where Rajau was hurriedly putting away his equipment.

“Huh? What??”

“Hey, over here.” Kenneth, standing in the center of the room, beckoned to Seina.

“Kenneth?”

“Seina, it's time for roll call.”

“Roll call?”

Seina stood next to Rajau with a curious look on his face, when a 3D image of the two GP instructors appeared before him and his friends.

“Kenneth Bāru!”

“Rajau Ga Waura!”

Kenneth and Rajau saluted slowly, as if they've practiced it.

“I'm Y-Yamada Seina!”

Following after the two, he quickly saluted. Then, a ring-shaped light appeared the boys feet and rose up around their bodies.

“Huh!?”

“Don’t move. They’re scanning your data to verify your identity.” Rajau whispered to Seina.

“Data scan?”

When Seina looked at the instructor, a 3D image of Seina and the others, about 30 centimeters in height, began to appear in front of the instructors, linked to the scanning ring.

“Hmm?”

One of the instructors grimaced as, for just a moment, Seina's data became distorted.

“Noise?”

“You see, he's the one…” The other instructor whispered.

“There's an error in this system… I see, it's just as the rumors say.”

The instructor looked at Seina with interest, which was something Seina was used to seeing on Earth, but it wasn't the kind of behavior that disgusted him.

“Should I rescan with a different one?”

“Well, the fact that an error occured is the best proof of that.”

“That's true.”

The instructors, who had been whispering and smiling wryly, turned to the three of them again with stern looks on their faces.

“Okay! Tomorrow is the Academy entrance ceremony for you three. Make sure you get plenty of rest.”

“Yes sir!”

The instructors saluted Seina and the others, then their images disappeared.

“Whew…”

As the instructors disappeared, Kenneth and Rajau slumped to the floor, like marionettes with their strings cut.

“I always get nervous at this time.”

“Really. No matter how many times I do it, I never get used to it.”

“Does this roll call happen every day?”

“All the way to graduation.”

“Forever……”

Having other people watching over your home could be quite stressful. If that continued for the next two years, it was no wonder Kenneth and Rajau were reluctant.

“Even after graduating, there are many people who still can't break the habit of standing upright at this time.” **(Mihoshi)**

“Ugh, no, no. I don't want to be that guy.”

“I see. Life in the dorms is tough in a lot of ways…”

But that was nothing compared to the misfortune that bound Seina. On the contrary, he was grateful that he was treated like a normal person. He was accepted by this place, his friends, and his teachers, and he quickly became accustomed to this place.

“Now then.” Stretching deeply, Seina headed towards his bed.

“Hmm? Where are you going?”

“Well, I was thinking about going to bed early, just like the instructor said earlier…”

“What are you talking about, Seina…” Kenneth stood and approached Seina.

“?”

Kenneth put the NB in Seina's hand.

“…The night is just beginning”

He gave a meaningful grin.

“???”

“Oh crap! He cut it off!”

Fingu tried to contact Kenneth's room, but the call was cut off because it was roll call time.

“Okay! Let's go to Kenneth's room and do a surprise interview!”

“Oh!”

Elroy and Fingu were so excited that they ran towards the entrance… but…

—Bang!!

The door, which would normally have opened, didn't respond at all, and the two hit their heads hard and fell down.

“Ouch… Shit! Why are we locked in?” Holding his head in pain, he hit the unlock button.

“Damn! Is it broken?”

“You two, it's time for roll call.” A voice called out to the two of them from behind.

“Huh?”

Elroy and Fingu turned around in shock, the voice being unexpected enough to kill their momentum.

“The doors are locked when it's time for roll call. Have you forgotten?” David stood there smiling brightly, his expression refreshed as if he had been lifted from a burden.

“…You… David?”

The two of them were so shocked by the drastic change in his appearance…or rather, by the smile of a boy who had returned to the cheerful and bright days before he had become a Ryoko fan, that they were frozen in place, as if paralyzed.

“Kenneth and the others will probably escape after the lights go out, so why not do it then?”

Roll call was at nine o'clock in the evening, a time when even elementary school students would be awake, but the lights were turned off and the dormitory was enveloped in silence. However, a conspiracy was underway, as if lurking deep within.

“Let's see…”

Following Rajau's instructions, Seina typed in the necessary information as displayed on the NB startup screen.

“Okay, now all you have to do is insert Seina's ID card and enter the serial number and PIN number with your voiceprint and you're done.”

With that, Kenneth and Rajau left.

Seina puts up an S-field around his bed and called out the number.

Pee.

An error sound rang out.

“Huh?”

One more time.

Pee.

An error sound rang out.

“Huh?”

And again.

Pee.

But mercilessly, an error sound rang out.

“Hey Rajau, no matter how many times I try, it doesn't work.” Seina deactivated the field and explained the situation.

“That's strange, isn't it? It's voiceprint input, so it's not likely that you'd make multiple mistakes…”

“Well, what if we're doing it this way? There's no problem with security if it's just the initial startup password. We can just turn on encryption protection later.”

“That's true. Seina, we'll check it, so please try again.”

“Okay.”

With the two of them watching, Seina carefully checked the numbers and spoke them out loud.

Pee.

An error sound rang out.

“No good after all”

“…Seina…you…said the numbers wrong.” Kenneth nodded in agreement with Rajau.

“What?! But it's exactly what's written in the manual.”

“Huh? Rajau… what's going on?”

“Seina, what is this number?” Rajau thought for a moment before displaying some random numbers on the floating monitor.

“Let's see, …… nine billion eight hundred trillion ……”

“Oh no, just say them in order by number…huh?”

“Seina… the digits are all messed up. Hahahaha.” Kenneth burst out laughing next to him.

“The numbers and digits are wrong…Seina, you’re not joking, are you?”

In contrast to Kenneth, Rajau looked at Seina with a straight face.

“I wouldn't do that.”

“Hmm… Seina, you are from an early stage planet, right?” When he said that, he thought for a moment.

“Yeah.”

“So no galactic language is spoken on Earth?”

“Onnainin said that they installed nanomachines or something…” He answered in a sad whisper.

“If that's the case, then it's likely a mistake caused by a bug in the memory formation nanomachines.”

“But I've never heard of such a case.”

“But I can't think of anything else… Could this also be due to a bias in your probability?”

“Ah, I see.”

As they said this, Rajau and Kenneth looked at Seina.

“Rajau…what should I do?”

“There is nothing we can do about this at our level. Let’s consult with a specialist tomorrow and have them install a patch. Well, since there haven’t been any problems up until now, I don’t think it will affect your daily life, but please be careful with numbers.”

“Then maybe that meal we just had was just a mistake on Seina's part.”

“That's a possibility.”

“Huh?”

“What's wrong, Seina?”

“So how did the phone go through? If numbers are no good then phone numbers must be all messed up…”

“Did the call go through? That's strange, isn't it?”

Then, Rajau casually launched the communications software.

“……Ah!”

When Seina saw this, he couldn't help but cry out.

“What's wrong?”

“That… picture…”

It displayed a graphic that Seina had become familiar with.

“Oh, this is an antique telephone design that's popular these days.”

“I heard it was excavated from some ruins.”

There was no doubt that what the 3D monitor was displaying was that black telephone. **(The classic black rotary dial phone that was in every Japanese home from the 1950’s to the 1970’s.)**

“Recently, it's become popular to use these shapes and numbers for telephone communication.”

“Those… the numbers of Earth.”

If Earth's numeric characters were used, then telephone calls should work fine.

“…I see, these are Earth numbers… that's… unlucky.” Rajau laughed wryly.

“Well, no one would have noticed until now… so I guess all I need to do is rewrite the serial numbers to the Earth system.”

“That's true, but…”

As he listened to their conversation, Seina noticed something that made his mood dark and heavy.

“Hey Rajau… that installation mistake I made earlier… can't we just leave it as it is?”

“It's okay if it's for a short period of time, but it's quite dangerous to leave it like that. It's impossible to live without numbers, just like the initial startup of this NB.”

“You’re scared because the installation failed once. I’m sure you’re fine.”

“……Yeah”

Seina nodded slightly and looked up, but his expression was gloomy.

“Regarding the launch of NB, given Seina-kun’s characteristics, there is no guarantee that there will be no other installation errors, and we do not know what kind of adverse effects will occur, so I think it would be better to have an expert fix the problem before officially launching it.”

“So you're not going to use this one?”

“This machine is a prototype, so if we limit the functionality, we should be able to make do with the test startup function. In fact, the processing speed will be faster.”

Listening to Rajau's voice, Seina tried desperately to change his mood.

(That's true… it was beyond my ability to begin with… but…)

But Seina's heavy, gloomy mood never improved, because it meant he would no longer have the skills that others needed.

Chapter Three: My Thoughts Are Far Away

Not far from the dormitory where Seina was located, there was a complex terrain of nearly fifty table-shaped steps and dozens of lakes, large and small, scattered throughout the area.

What was originally a single lake was divided and separated by the collapse and uplift of the planet's crust caused by an old experiment. However, after many years of erosion and being covered with vegetation, it was eventually shaped into a beautiful landscape and transformed into a resort with many villas.

On the top floor of this table-like terrain, also known as the “Broken Plate,” there was a small lake with beautiful spring water, which could be considered the source of the river, and on the shore of the lake stood a small, lit, old-style house. The appearance of this house, combined with the surrounding green scenery, made it seem as if this place was Japan on Earth.

“Okay, Minaho. I would like to order the items on that list.”

In the center of the living room, which was about 10 tatami mats in size, there was a low table that had been turned into a sunken kotatsu, and Kiriko and Minaho, who were in a force field, were sitting across from each other and conducting a business meeting.

“You see, Kiriko-chan, this BB-10044 product is really popular right now, so I'd like to limit the quantity if possible.”

Minaho sold Earth crops that were produced on a planet in the space of her grandmother, First Empress of Jurai, Funaho. The crops were originally produced in limited quantities for Funaho to eat, but Minaho expanded the production to almost all planets and made it into an export industry in order to fund Seto's activities.

However, this was not unique to Funaho's space. Contrary to what one might think, Jurai was a major agricultural and forestry powerhouse.

Kiriko then purchased agricultural products from Minaho and used them to exchange for cash on Earth.

When the Masaki family brought back to Earth the money they had earned in space, they usually used precious metals that were also mined on Earth, such as gold and platinum. However, they could only be converted into cash at designated locations on Earth, and there were restrictions on how much could be brought in to avoid upsetting the market price. Furthermore, it was impossible to bring back the enormous amount of money that Seina had earned this time all at once.

However, foodstuffs similar to those found on Earth were an exception, so Kiriko brought in a variety of agricultural products and was able to earn more than the exchange rate through normal commerce.

The cultivation techniques used were incomparable to those on Earth, and all the crops were of the highest quality, there were no pests and diseases, and they easily met the standards of each country, and the cost of interstellar transportation was also very cheap. In fact, domestic transportation on Earth was actually more expensive.

But the biggest advantage was that it allowed fresh produce to be stored in its ripe state almost indefinitely.

It was impossible not to make a profit by looking at the production situation in each country and selling products that were in short supply due to poor harvests. Of course, it was prohibited to induce excessive market prices, so the sales were at a reasonable price, but even so, it was an advantage that was almost sneaky.

“BB-10044 is also expected to have a poor harvest on Earth.”

Ignoring Minaho's pleading gaze, she answered nonchalantly.

“But…Kiriko-chan”

“I believed in you, Minaho-sama.”

“I feel like I did a bad thing by deceiving you…” She looked up at Kiriko to see how she was feeling.

“I thought you understood what happened to Seina-chan.”

Her calm tone actually made Minahou realize just how deep-rooted Kiriko's anger was.

“Okay… I lose. Now that you mentioned Seina-kun's name, it can't be helped… I owe him a lot of money.”

—And also…

Minaho glanced at Kiriko. She had no way of resisting the bravery of Kiriko, who was of the same bloodline as Masaki and was like a cute little sister to her.

“Minaho-sama… please don't tell Seina-chan about that.”

“I know, but Kiriko-chan, didn’t you complain that Seina’s bounty was too high?”

“Since I've received it, I want to increase it as much as possible.”

“You'll make a great wife.”

“What?! What what what what all of a sudden?”

Seeing Kiriko's flustered face, Minaho smiled with satisfaction. She took an expensive product at a low price, well, this was a bit of payback.

“I'm here purely as Seina-chan 's guardian.”

“If he’s so cute, why don’t you just stay with him?”

“Space is too dangerous for Seina-chan. Minaho-sama knows that very well… that's why I became Seto's subordinate. Seina is unlucky even on Earth…”

(Considering his characteristics, it would probably be safest for him to stay on Earth… but he chose a different path…) She thought as she looked at Kiriko, who was looking down sadly.

(Her weakness is that she is too opinionated. In that case, I can understand what Seto-sama is trying to do… but maybe I was being a bit hasty just now.)

Thinking this, Minaho said cheerfully to change the dark atmosphere.

“Well, at least accepting the reward was probably the right decision for Seina-kun's safety… No, for the safety of his chastity.”

“Huh? Chastity…”

She looked up anxiously at the incomprehensible words.

"I heard from Seto-sama that the accounting department was very happy, right? Especially since that project was something that had to be done even if it meant Jurai's finances would suffer."

“I know that you are willing to pay any price for that defeat, but...”

“The accounting department was also keenly aware of this… and had prepared for it.”

“Prepared?”

“Even if we have to sell ourselves…”

“No way! That can't be…”

“And that's the result…hehe…”I wouldn't mind being held by Seina-sama!”…”

“!”

Kiriko, who had predicted what was to come, was suddenly taken aback by Minaho’s dramatic voice. The content of the radical lines was too vivid and sexy for her to handle.

“No way…Minaho-sama!?”

Kiriko's anxious expression was like that of an innocent child. With her judgement impaired, Kiriko's thought process momentarily mistook those words for Minaho's will.

“Well, they were crying when they said that.” Minaho had to struggle to contain her laughter at Kiriko's adorable reaction.

“What?! Ah!”

Kiriko's confused thought process finally returned to normal. However, her face turned red as she realized that she had made a very childish mistake.

Kiriko was worried that someone else might take Seina away from her. Her reaction was different from Amane's, and she also had a complex about Minaho. She was like Kiriko's older sister, someone she looked up to, and someone she aspired to be.

This was due to the fact that there was a sense that she could never compare to Minaho, and also the familiarity of being like family.

“If you decline the reward money, they might rush over to Seina's place and say, ‘We don't care what you do to us. Go ahead and do whatever you want,’ or something like that.”

Kiriko's reaction was greater than she had expected, so Minaho felt it would be a shame to make her feel any more anxious, and so she spoke in a normal tone.

“…Indeed…” – It was dizzying to imagine…

“Well, she was extremely poor and deep in debt. Then, a vicious loan shark stole her sick father's futon and tried to sell her to a brothel. When her father resisted, he was cut by the loan shark's henchman and left for dead. Before she could be sold, she was pushed down and almost raped...Just as she was in this desperate situation, a righteous samurai happened by and saved her. Her father, who had been stabbed, was also saved, and thanks to the samurai's kindness, he was taken to a doctor for free and fully recovered.The despicable loan shark and his henchmen were ruthlessly cut down, and all the money they had illegally taken was returned, so it was like the debt was erased.”

“I don't know why the analogy was a period drama, but I totally get it.”

“Yeah, that's good.”

She smiled with satisfaction at the results.

“Haa……”

She sighed deeply and thought to herself, (Because of Seto, the accounting department has to apologize to all sorts of people and it's a lot of stress).

[Cheap] was their favorite word. So in a situation like this, it was no wonder they felt overly grateful towards Seina.

(……Ah!!)

Moreover, because of the nature of the accounting department, it deliberately attracted the type of women who were beautiful or somewhat dainty in appearance, and who were difficult to complain about or to - the type of women who could easily gain favor with the general public.

(Wait a minute! If that's what's happening to Seina-chan then…)

“!! Kiriko…chan?”

Minaho suddenly noticed a sudden change in Kiriko's aura. The fear she felt was chilling, and it was not something you could feel at ease with even if you were tens of light years away in space.

“……Minaho-sama”

It was a voice that perfectly described how it sounded like it was coming from the pits of hell.

“Wh-what?” She answered, being extremely careful not to provoke her.

“Please tell them that they don't need to thank him. Seina-chan is still a child.”

“…R-Right… I see. Of course. Okay, I get it. I'll definitely let them know.”

Kiriko's expression and tone of voice were cheerful, but in contrast to that, there was an incredibly dark aura swirling around, more like a super typhoon.

(……Scary……)

Minaho's back was soaked with cold sweat. Kiriko's pressure was similar to the unpleasant pressure Seto sometimes exuded - no, it was much more troublesome because she couldn't control her own rampage. She thought she had kindled the fire, but it seems she overdid it.

(That's right, a “snake in the haystack”.)

When it came to Seina, Kiriko was as nervous and dangerous as a mother tiger protecting her cubs.

“I'll make sure the items arrive on time. See you then.”

Deciding it would be wise to end the conversation quickly, Minaho said that in a quick voice and then hung up the phone as if fleeing.

“… Seriously… you've got to be kidding me! Seina is still a child.”

Crack!

The crystal plate of the low table, which was as hard as metal and on which her hand was resting, cracked.

“Anyway, I have to make sure this doesn't get any more complicated! I'm Seina-chan's guardian.”

With renewed determination, she accessed the surveillance system in the GP Academy men's dormitory.

A moment later, the peaceful sleeping face of Seina was on screen, softening Kiriko's stern expression like that of a Virgin Mary.

“Thank goodness…huh!?”

But Kiriko was an expert on Seina. Her superior information processing ability immediately revealed that it was a dummy.

“Seto-sama… Kiriko is scary.” Minaho said with tears in her eyes as she stood on Mikagami's bridge.

All the attention of the people gathered at the meeting for the [Sword] dispatch was focused on Minaho.

“Minaho, we are in the middle of an important meeting right now!”

The first to complain was the accounting department chief, Tatsuki Ringo.

“Moreover, she whines in front of her subordinates…”

“Oh, you lost the business deal with Kiriko? How sloppy.” Seto said, interrupting Ringo.

“But Kiriko-chan always brings up Seina-kun and makes a really scary face.”

As she said this, she showed a video recording of the transaction that had just taken place. This was the official copy that served as a contract.

“!!”

A ripple of shock spread among those present.

“…Wow…”

Even Seto, who was known for her impressive acting, was left whispering at Kiriko's powerful expression.

“You just said '…… wow ……', didn't you?” Minaho sounded triumphantly.

“Ugh, shut up. A loss is a loss. I can make a scarier face than Kiriko-chan.”

“Please don't have a weird competitive spirit!” Ringo cut in with a shocked look on her face.

“I can make a scarier face than you, Ringo!”

It was spectacularly unpopular.

"And ....., of course.That's why we need to resume our meeting as soon as possible. ....."

She had a prayerful expression on her face, suppressing the urge to interject.

“See, Ringo says so too.”

Despite Ringo's wishes, Seto resumed her language battle with Minaho once again.

“Come on, Seto-sama, Kiriko-chan... When it comes to Seina-kun... She even grabs things like that with her bare hands, so there's no way you can win.”

“That's…huh?” Seto blushed like a young girl, as if she had remembered something.

“Yes… that's it.” Minaho's face was also bright red.

“…Hmmmm…that's true.”

All of her earlier enthusiasm was gone and she now crossed her arms and was deep in thought.

"Right, right? For Seina-kun, I wouldn't hesitate to touch that slimy, jumpy, slightly scary thing.”

“I… I'm not sure if I can do that.”

“What are you two talking about?”

As the two of them look down with serious expressions, Ringo, unable to bear it any longer, interjected.

"Oh, you know Ringo-chan, right? Kiriko-chan and young Seina-sama..."

Seto looked at Ringo meaningfully.

“I am aware of that, but that is not what we need to talk about right now!”

She desperately tried to interrupt the flow of the conversation, trying to get back on topic. However, the levee was still in danger of breaking…

“Hey Ringo, that's the story, right?”

Hakuren and her group of four, who were about to depart, and Ringo's subordinates joined in the conversation.

(N-no…)

The levee breach was no longer something Ringo could handle on her own.

“By the way, Ringo-chan. Kiriko-chan has a message for you, 'You don't have to thank Seina-chan'…”

“What?!”

Ringo's expression became grim after hearing Minaho's words.

"I'm not kidding! It is unforgivable for a Jurai woman, even in the accounting department ....., to do nothing after receiving such a great favor!"

The levee she built was breached by none other than her own hands.

“Good girl!” Seto quickly spread her fan and scattered confetti.

“You cannot be serious! To do nothing after being so indebted, as the Accounting De—no, as a Juraian woman, this is unforgivable!”
“Good for you!”
Seto opened a fan and spread a blizzard of confetti.

“But Seto-sama ……, if you meddle too much, Kiriko-chan might destroy your accounting department.” As she said this, Minaho replayed the footage from earlier.

“Hmm… well, that's true… isn't it?”

Seto glanced over at Ringo - her eyes said it was impossible.”

“Seto-sama! If it's for Seina-sama, I can handle that scary, slimy, squirming thing!”

Ringo stood up annoted at Seto's words, and the force of her words sent ripples of excitement through the room.

“Just as you'd expect from the Chief of Accounting, the Treasurer of The Demon Princess!” Gyokuren rose to her feet, joining in the roaring cheers of her accounting subordinates. “Haha… I can grab it too.”

Everyone there was captivated by her beauty and graceful demeanor, which even her fellow women found captivating, and the murmuring and applause died down in an instant.

“…Well, I guess you could just grab it without a second thought.” Karen, who was completely unfazed by the atmosphere of Gyokuren, muttered in an exasperated tone.

“Haha. That's impossible for a child like you.”

“Don't call me a child! I can do it too!”

Karen's words brought back the murmuring and commotion.

“That's right, that's right! That's the spirit of a woman of Jurai! Now, with that determination, grab that slightly scary thing that's slithering and wriggling around, and break through Kiriko-chan to give Seina-sama a big thank you~~♡”

“Yesssssss♡”

Ringo and Gyokuren were filled with excitement and raised their hands in joy.

“By the way, all accounting staff except Ringo should stay away from Kiriko.”

“Yesssssss♡”

(Oh dear… If Kiriko-kun were here… she'd probably go crazy…) Unable to intervene in Seto and the others' lovey-dovey conversation, Kanemitsu just stood there in the corner with his back turned, feeling as uncomfortable as a new teacher who had just been assigned to a girls' school.

“He escaped?!”

Kiriko was unaware of the lovers' quarrel that was unfolding between Seto and the others,

and in a panic, she put a filter on the dummy data. However…

“What is this? Can't the dormitory management system handle this?!”

She immediately connected the surveillance system in Seina's room directly to her own information processing system.

“…Freeze?!”

It was no wonder Kiriko thought so. This system, which Kiriko built, was said to be the second best privately owned system in Jurai. It should take less than a second to produce results.

“No way!”

As Kiriko tried to recheck the system, she noticed a round object placed in the center of Seina's room, with a mark on the box.

“Wh-what are they using…? It's Airi-sama's workshop NB!”

Only then did Kiriko's system finally produce results.

It took a few seconds for the results to appear…

“…No! He’s already out of the room.”

She displayed the dormitory layout.

“Just in time!”

She searched for Seina while removing the protection that Kenneth and his friends had set up. Her speed was so fast that it was like she was kicking them away.

But even though it was students who set it up, they were still members of the Academy. The know-how of their seniors had been there for many years, and there were also fools who would buy questionable programs from graduate students, so it was troublesome.

“What the hell are you using?”

Fortunately for Kiriko, however, the NB was in test mode.

Although the processing speed was fast, the programs used were prepared by the students. In its original state, even if it was a small unit, it was an NB created by Airi, who held the highest degree in the Galaxy Academy, the title of Philosopher. There was no doubt that it was a super weapon filled with useless functions. Breaking through its technology would be like infiltrating the central system of a country.

“……There!”

Three light spots representing Seina and his roommates were flashing on the diagram.

Seina and his roommates, dressed in uniforms with special programs installed that disrupted sensors, were sneaking down a dimly lit corridor lit by a small nightlight.

“Well, maybe this is not so good after all?” Seina looked around nervously.

“Hey, are Earthlings really that serious a race?”

“That's strange. I've heard they're just like us.”

Kenneth looked very happy, while Rajau was checking something on his mobile machine.

“If someone finds out…”

“As long as we can fool the sensors we'll be fine. You've made it this far safely, haven't you?”

“Besides, the best time to party is when the kids are asleep… after the lights are out. So we have to do this…”

“What? Are you going to a party?”

“The Academy is home to many people from all over the galaxy.” Rajau began to explain in a low voice as he peered down the corridor that had become a crossroads. “Each has different customs and religious beliefs, and of course each has their own special days. They celebrate things…”

Seina and the others looked left and right before heading straight down the hallway.

“So… if you combine personal birthdays and celebrations, as well as national festivals, there's some kind of celebration almost every day, and there are hundreds of them a day…sometimes even tens of thousands.”

“Well, it's a pain, so we decided to celebrate it all together, and the whole town is partying every day.”

“E-every day?!”

“Yes. It's your chance to meet beautiful young ladies from from different countries!” Rajau and Kenneth had shameful grins on their faces.

“And what's more!” Kenneth took out a card from his pocket, about the size of a banknote. Its thin, transparent plate shone like an opal. “We have a special invitation to 'Imuimu'!”

He looked as proud as if he were displaying the seal of Mito Komon **(TN: Tokugawa Mitsukuni also known as Mito Kōmon (1628-1701). Politician in the early Edo Period. There was period drama on TV in Japan, 1969-2011).**

“…What…is 'Imuimu'?”

“Don't you know, Seina?”

“Hahaha, Kenneth-kun, there's no way Seina-kun, who just arrived in space, could know.”

“Hahaha, I see! Well then, Rajau, please explain it to him.”

The way they both spoke was somewhat theatrical and exaggerated.

“I would love to, but I’ll save my joy for when I get out of the dorms.”

“Oh.”

Well, just like in any other comedy act, Rajau added the punch line and the three of them started walking again.

“What should I do?”

Kiriko was worried because escaping from the dorm was a matter between the dormitory staff and the students, and it was against the rules at the Academy for a third party to get involved. And escaping was also part of the training in a way.

“But… I still think it's not good! It's dangerous to let Seina-chan out on the town at night.” Once she convinced herself, she began accessing the security system.

“That being said…”

Unlike military facilities or laboratories, frankly speaking, there was only so much a dormitory's security system could do. At best, it could stun people with a surveillance probe equipped with a stun gun. Even if she used her boastworthy system, it was pointless if the terminal was not good enough.

“Everyone, stop!”

Rajau waved them both away and stared at the small monitor.

“What’s up?”

“Someone is using our route”

“Tch, who's there? At this time of night.”

“We can't complain about others, but… we have no choice but to take a different route.”

“Okay, Seina, let’s change route…huh?”

He looked and saw that Seina was heading back down the hallway they had just come from.

“Hey!”

Kenneth grabbed Seina by the collar and pulled him back.

“Nothing good ever happens when I go…”

“That's not true. Besides, we're roommates, right? How can I leave you alone and go out and play? Hey Rajau.”

“Of course!”

“…Thank you both…But…”

“This invitation can only be used by three people!”

“…I see.”

It ruined all the excitement.

“So, now that we’ve settled that, the problem is… if we want to use a different route, the only option is to go through the garden.”

He looked at the garden outside the hallway with a troubled look on his face.

“There's a surveillance probe wandering around in the garden.”

“I want to avoid as many dangerous situations as possible before we leave the dorm.”

“Dangerous?”

“Seina, remember this. If the surveillance probe finds you…”

Rajau used his hand to push up Kenneth's bangs.

There was a strange mark imprinted on his forehead.

“Such a wonderful gift…”

“What… is that mark?”

“You don't know? You have the basics installed, right?”

“Kenneth, there's no way they'd include that suspicious mark.” Rajau's face was bright red.

“Maybe… it's some kind of embarrassing mark to wear?”

“Correct! It's the most embarrassing mark in the world!”

“It's more embarrassing than walking around town completely naked and doing

unspeakable things.”

“Wha… No way…”

“By the way, if you collect ten of these marks, you will be given a chance to win a GP freighter toilet cleaner trip around the galaxy for two.”

Rajau was nodding next to him.

“…No way.”

Rajau slapped Seina's chest with the back of his hand, and the two bowed their heads to Seina as a signal.

“…How much of this is true?”

“The mark is real.”

Kenneth hid in the shadow of the wall facing the garden side of the hallway and peeked outside.

“I don't see any surveillance probes in sight.”

“Kenneth, are you incapable of learning? How did you get that mark on your forehead?”

“Hahahaha.”

He pulled his face back from behind the fence.

“But the problem is, we still don't have any data on the courtyard.”

“Can't we just force our way through somehow?”

“If we could figure out the patrol patterns of the surveillance probes, we could do something… but since we don't have that data, it would be a waste to just break through…”

“But this is the only way to go, right?”

“… Yes it is.”

Rajau pulled out a small pinball-like object from his pocket, which then left his hand and floated away.

“?”

“Oh, that's a panoramic camera. Look, you can see the image here.”

As Seina stared at him curiously, he pointed to the monitor and explained. There, he saw an image that looked like it was captured through a fisheye lens. Looking closely, he can see the three of them hiding behind a wall.

“Let's just do everything we can….Ahhh!!!”

Suddenly, Rajau, who was watching the monitor, froze with a look of shock on his face.

“Hmm? What's wrong…”

Kenneth, looked at the monitor, and also froze.

“What's wrong? You two…”

When they looked at the monitor, they saw a cluster of cylinders that filled the entire wall behind which the three were hiding.

“…Th-this…could it be…”

“Don't move! Those are surveillance probes.”

His expression was stiff and he spoke in an unnatural tone, almost like a synthesized voice.

“Why are there so many of them here?”

Kenneth and Rajau slowly turned towards Seina.

“…So…it's my fault after all?”

—Kokkun.

They both nodded to answer his question.

Naturally, the first to find out about Seina and his roommates' escape was Airi, the creator of NB.

“Oh dear! Seina left without his NB.”

At that moment, there was a knock on the door and Mikami came in.

“I heard a loud noise. What happened?”

“Seina used NB as a dummy to escape from the dorm.”

“Oh my goodness. Trying to escape on the night before the entrance ceremony… Seems like they are good friends. So, has Seina-kun gotten outside yet?”

“It's still in progress. Kiriko-chan seems to be interfering, so it won't be that easy. But the problem is that he left the NB I gave to him as a good luck charm.”

“I see. Well then, your timing is perfect. Airi-sama, the Sword has arrived from Jurai.”

“Oh, okay. Let them in.”

“Yes. Come in.”

Urged by Mikami, the five of them came in. They had come through a super long distance teleportation gate that had been installed in the president's office connecting to Mikagami.

“Thank you for your hard work…but why is Ringo here too?” Airi noticed Ringo coming in last and yelled.

“The accounting department owes a great debt to Seina-sama.”

“That being said… the head of the accounting department didn't have to come all the way out here.

“That's why…” Although she had a soft demeanor, she spoke firmly.

“Well, how exactly do you plan to repay the debt?”

“Eh? Ah, well…” Ringo suddenly started to panic and stuttered.

“You were persuaded by Seto-sama and came on impulse, but… you didn't really think about it, did you?”

“I will do everything I can! If that is what you wish for, Seina-sama…”

Everyone present stared in shock at Ringo, her cheeks flushed and her head bowed.

(Damn! Isn't she cute…) Airi desperately tried to resist the urge to hug her.

(As expected from Seto's accounting department… and …)

Moreover, she was a member of the Imperial Tatsuki family, a somewhat unusual existence within the feared and courageous Jurai royal family. The Tatsuki family was popular for its gentle nature, and their daughters were pure and lovely, receiving no shortage of marriage proposals as the "number one most wanted bride in the Galactic Federation”.

(Seto-sama often complains that it's boring because marriage proposals are easily arranged with the Tatsuki family… but)

“But you can't. He’s still a minor.”

“B-but!”

“Well, don't worry. Maybe your skills as an accountant can be of some use to Seina-kun.” She smiled meaningfully.

“My?”

“If Seina manages to escape the dorm… in any case, Ringo will be my assistant and the other four members of the [Sword] will be on standby and ready to go, okay?”

“Roger that!”

“Well, what are we going to do now? If this continues, we won't be able to move.”

The three of them were still huddled together, hiding behind the wall, unable to find a solution.

“Dammit, why are they still here?”

“They’ll probably be there until we get back to our rooms.”

“Hey Kenneth, why don't we just stop for today?”

“I can't let this wonderful invitation slip away!”

“Exactly! But if we continue like this we won't be able to move.”

“That's pretty annoying… aren't most of the guys from the dorm here?” He said disgustedly, peering at Rajau's monitor.

“That's very likely… Yes!”

Kenneth's words seemed to have struck a chord.

“The fact that the surveillance probes, which normally patrol at regular intervals, are concentrated here means that if something were to attract their attention, there's a high possibility that they would all go there.”

“I see… Maybe I should throw a rock at them to get their attention?”

“Kenneth… I don't know about humans, but there's no way that would work on surveillance probes.” He sounded truly annoyed.

“I-I was just kidding.”

Judging from Kenneth's panic, he seemed to be quite serious.

“Rajau, do you have a better idea?”

“Well… anti-sensor flash grenades.”

“That's first-class GP equipment. There's no way a student could get their hands on it so easily.”

“Well then, how about a high-performance animeroid with a pseudo-force field? Kenneth, do you have any of those among your erotic goods?”

“Look, there's no way I could afford something that ridiculously expensive.”

“In that case… we need someone to act as a decoy…”

“We can't enter 'Imuimu' unless there are three people.”

“Hey Kenneth, I'll be the decoy. If you want three people, you can just find someone in town who's willing to join you. If I go with you, there'll probably be a lot of trouble like right now…”

“…You're a good person…Seina-kun.”

Kenneth and Rajau were touched by Seina's words for a moment… but…“Seina. It’s a heartwarming and appreciated proposal, but it comes with the condition that we be part of a team.”

“Oh dear… I'm totally stuck. If only there was another careless escapee at a time like this…”

Just as Rajau said that. From afar, they heard a rustling sound along with a faint human voice.

“What the hell?!”

“Kenneth, Seina, now!”

Rajau took off running like a rabbit, and they instinctively followed him.

When they rushed out, they found there was not a single surveillance probe there, which had been so densely packed.

—Wow, waah… Aaaaaaaaahhhh…

There was a rapid-fire sound like an air gun and the scream of two angry people behind them.

“!!”

“Don't look back!” Rajau scolded.

“Ahhh! Ugh, come on!” Kiriko, who was controlling the surveillance probes, groaned and yelled.

“What are those kids doing?!”

“Those kids” did not refer to Seina and his group, but to another team that was hiding nearby.

“You suddenly jumped out into the courtyard… You should have known there were surveillance probes there… No good! You've been overrun.”

The light spot indicating Seina and his friends' presence had already left the probe's area of

operation.

“If I keep the surveillance probes completely under control, the dorms will notice me and .....”

(But… did they use the remaining one… or two people as decoys? …No way.)

Seina and his roommates walked along the large hedge that served as a safe zone and arrived at a huge stone door.

“Once we leave here we'll have the freedom we've always dreamed of… Imuimu~.

Kenneth excitedly took out the invitation and kissed it.

“Hey, are we there yet?”

“Please wait a moment. There have been a lot of other escapees today, so it's difficult to make sure the unlock IDs are all unique… Ah.”

Then, the heavy sound of the door opening echoed.

“Great! It's open!”

Kenneth pumped his fist in excitement in front of the door. However…

“Haha… sorry. I made a mistake.”

“Huh?”

The boys noticed a bunch of surveillance probes floating in front of them.

“!!”

Seina was the first to react, but human reflexes were not capable of keeping up with the speed of a surveillance probe.

Bashuu!

A barrage of compressed air bullets were fired from the surveillance drones.

“Ahhh!”

However, it was David, who jumped out from the side to protect Seina and the others, who yelled.

“David?!”

“Hurry… run.”

The next moment, an intense flash of light enveloped the area.

“What the hell was that?!”

Kiriko slammed her hand on the low table and shouted at the monitor, which had gone blank from the anti-sensor flash grenades.

“It's no good… My sensors are completely dead… I guess there's no other way… I'm hesitant to use it though…”

“Haa haa haa.”

Seina and the others were sitting in the bushes a little way from the stone gate, panting.

“Without David's help, we would have been lost.”

“But why?”

“Maybe he was thinking that if you owed him a favor you might get some video of a certain lady pirate? What is more important is what we are going to do about it. Hey Kenneth …”

“Ughhhh … Imuimu~~.”

Kenneth was crying as he saw the small fragment. The invitation ticket to “ImuImu” that Kenneth had was destroyed by the first shot fired from the surveillance probe at the stone gate.

“…It's damaged to the extent that it can't be used any more. You have no choice but to give up, Kenneth.”

“Ughhhh … Imuimu~~.”

Kenneth continued to cry, Rajau's words of comfort falling on deaf ears.

“…Oh dear, it looks like that's not going to happen anytime soon.”

“What do we do now?” Seina was also anxious.

“Well… the best way to get out is through the underground storehouse…what?” Rajau suddenly started looking around.

“Rajau?”

“Shh! Quiet! I can hear… something.”

“Huh?”

Seina looked around just like Rajau and began to see countless small red dots of light among the trees.

“Ah… that!”

Its shape, illuminated in the moonlight, resembled an Earth octopus.

“Whaaaaaaat!”

The sound of gunfire rang out through the underground passage as Seina and the boys ran desperately between the abandoned equipment, dodging air bullets the size of golf balls.

“Ah, that's a surveillance probe too?!”

“That's right! But please be careful. The mark of the surveillance probe is made of nanomachine pigments, so it won’t come off unless you have a deactivation pass!”

The small octopus-like machine chasing the boys had bullets in them that clearly showed the familiar markings.

“Hey… that mark, is it just me or does it look like it would hurt if you got hit?”

“It’s not your imagination. It hurts like hell!”

“Ughhhh …… Imuimu~~~!” Kenneth was running, crying.

“What if you just give up?”

“Imuimuuuu.”

“If you don't take it easy, you won't have any fun, let alone “Imuimu”!”

“Imuimuuuu.”

“Ugh… you, you!”

The way her whole body shook while operating the keyboard with a desperate look on her face closely resembled someone playing a fighting game at an arcade.

“Damn it!”

Kiriko, who was one of Seto's best subordinates when it came to processing information, was operating the surveillance device herself, but she was unable to land a decisive blow. Of course, the surveillance device was of low quality, but Seina's intuition and movements were better than expected, and he avoided all of the traps that she set.

“Amazing… what crisis avoidance skills you have.”

It was a sad but wonderful ability that Seina had been forced to cultivate over the years, from the moment he was born until today.

“…But…”

Although he managed to avoid Kiriko's deliberate traps, he kept falling and bumping into things at random places…other than that, Seina was pretty much his usual unlucky self.

— I don't know whether to feel happy or sad…

“Give up already before you get hurt!” Kiriko said with a worried look on her face even though she was having a lot of fun watching Seina run away like a baby rabbit.

“Heh heh.” A smile unconsciously spread across her face. At that time, Kiriko was completely unaware that she was on the path to becoming Seto.

“But it's not good. Of all people, I can't believe a Clay type of all the surveillance probes would find us.”

“What do you mean it's not good…?” He glanced back over his shoulder.

“It's a machine famous for its sneaky attacks. It focuses on exposed skin, shoots without warning like before, shoots even if you surrender, takes pictures of your face covered in dangerous marks and uploads them to its website, and apparently the patent fees for its pigmentation removal program are exorbitant… among other things, let’s see…”

“That's fine… I understand.”

They then came face to face with another group of boys being chased by surveillance probes from another corridor.

“!!”

Instantly realizing that they were being chased in the same way, the students formed a large group and began to flee into the warehouse, the only place that did not have any surveillance probes.

“Kenneth! You guys made a mistake!” A male student approached Seina’s group and yelled at them.

“Imuimuuuu~~!” He replied, crying.

“Wh-what?”

Then, another student approached Kenneth from behind.

“What are you going to do about it? It was going so well!”

“Imuimuuuu~~!” Kenneth shouted and quickly stepped back.

Bashuu! Bashuu! Bashuu!

“Ahhh!”

A male student took Kenneth's place and was hit by concentrated fire from the side and fell down.

“Hey Kenneth, it looks like you've finally recovered?”

“Imuimuuuuu… it's become a habit!”

“Hahaha, that's good, but things aren't going well.”

“What are we going to do? Kenneth, Rajau?”

“What are we going to do…huh!?”

Looking closer, he saw a small air car parked conveniently in front of where they were heading to escape.

“Okay, there it is!”

“But not with this number of people!”

“It's okay! I thought something like this might happen…”

He took a banana peel out of his pocket and threw it at the feet of the boy running behind him.

“A banana… peel?”

“Hahaha. Just to be clear, Seina, it's not a real banana peel, but a type of grenade that creates a barrier that reduces the coefficient of friction for a short period of time.”

Bam! There was a small sound, and just as expected, the students all slipped and fell like dominoes, falling prey to the surveillance probes one after the other.

“Coward!” The boys who were affected screamed.

“Don't look back! Keep running.” Kenneth said, clearly pleased.

“Hahaha. Kenneth, you're pretty badass, aren't you?

“Right… We must not let their deaths go to waste. The best we can do for them is to go to a party surrounded by beautiful women and have as much fun as we can.”

“Exactly. I guess it's fine if we bring back some souvenirs.”

(I guess it's just like Earth.) Seina was a little moved.

“Seina and Rajau, sit in the back! I'll drive!”

“O-okay!”

Seina was the first to put his hand on the air car door, and then…!

(Great! It worked!)

Surveillance probes swarmed out of the air car.

“!”

However, Seina's exceptional ability to avoid danger allowed him to avoid the inevitable hit.

“Ugh!”

However, Kenneth and Rajau were unable to avoid the attack and ended up lying on the ground with unspeakable marks clearly etched on their faces.

“Kenneth! Rajau!”

The moment Seina's attention was distracted by the two, surveillance probes aimed at him from all sides.

(Maybe not?)

“Prepare yourself… Seina-chan”

Her expression, tinged with a faint smile of pleasure, was of fierce beauty, but if anything she looked more like an evil female executive.

“Haha sorry… but it's for Seina-chan's sake”

She was a truly outstanding villain - Kiriko's fingers glided smoothly across the keyboard.

However, the surveillance probes surrounding Seina did not attack, because the surveillance probes that were chasing him shot the ones surrounding Seina.

“Who?”

Kiriko quickly checked the control systems.

“Did someone else break in?”

“No, Kiriko-chan.”

“Ah, Airi-sama?!”

“Now”

Seina tried to drag Kenneth and Rajau into the back seat of the air car.

“Seina-kun… don't worry about us, just run away…”

“Seina… have a wonderful night…”

Kenneth and Rajau gave Seina a thumbs up to encourage him, then looked exhausted.

“If you have the energy to make a joke like that, hurry up! We’re supposed to be working together.” He dropped the two of them and jumped into the driver's seat. “Don’t be lazy.”

A moment later, Kenneth and Rajau jumped into the back seat, and the next moment there was a loud bang and the hood was dented.

“Ugh! Isn't that a bit too powerful?”

Though small, police vehicles were quasi-combat vehicles. They were as sturdy as armored vehicles, if not tanks.

“It looks like they've switched to live ammunition for riot control.”

“To subdue us?! Is this it?”

“I once saw it being used to stop a pack of rampaging Badas on a ranch…”

“B-bada!? That's not what we call anti-personnel suppression!”

By the way, the Bada was a creature with a huge body and charging power comparable to that of an African elephant, similar to an Earth buffalo, and with jaws like a stag beetle that could even crush rocks.

“I don't recall saying it was for anti-personal use.”

“Hey! Why would they even using something like that on us?”

“It's a Clay type.”

While the two were performing their comedy routine, the air car ride was becoming bumpier, and the front shield glass was cloudy and looked like it might shatter at any moment.

“Oh no! Hurry up, Seina!”

“How do I make it work?”

“T-take the wheel.”

The genetic matching sensor attached to the handle reacted.

Rajau leaned forward from the back seat and inserted his card to operate the panel. Normally, it would only work if the card belonged to him, but as a student, Seina, Kenneth, and Rajau were considered a team, so it should work… but…

Beep… An error sound rang out.

“Oh, no! Seina, by any chance, have you been tinkering with this?”

“I tried my best, but…”

“T-Take my place!”

As Kenneth tried to grab the steering wheel, the car's onboard computer determined that the damage to the body of the car was an attack and ran the engine up to emergency speed.

“Whoa!”

As soon as the engine started, the air car suddenly accelerated because Seina had left his foot on the accelerator. The air car crushed the cargo and the surveillance probes inside the warehouse, and crashed into the closed door.

“Get down!”

“Woohoo!”

Boom! The door burst open and the air car's roof flew off, turning it into a convertible.

“Hey, hey, Seina! Drive properly!”

“Come to think of it, I don't have a license.”

“I knew it.”

“T-Take my place!”

Breaking the silence of the night, the air car sped along, deftly avoiding the trees in the forest, and finally destroyed the back gatepost and flew out of the dormitory grounds.

“It looks like they made it out.”

“Airi-sama! Why are you stopping me?”

“I don't have to tell you that, do I? This is the Academy.”

“But!”

“Don't get in the way of making memories of youth”

With that said, Airi cut off the call.

“Crap!”

After shuting down her security access, she grabbed her jacket and ran out the door.

Following Seina, of course.

“Yeah, me too!”

Kiriko herself had no intention of monitoring or interfering with Seina's student life.

She sometimes wondered if she was being overprotective, but just when she thought that, Seina would get injured and hospitalized.

(I don't recall accepting Seina being in space before that.)

But for now, she had to deal with the reality in front of her.

“There are human hunters in town.”

Human hunters… the general term for people who searched for subjects for human experiments. The number of such people increased especially around the time when the ignorant freshmen arrived.

(I should have put a tracking device on him.)

Cursing her own carelessness, Kiriko jumped onto the transporter port. However, at this point, both Airi and Kiriko had underestimated Seina's abilities… or perhaps that was simply Seina's ability. A small, everyday commotion in the dorm was rippling out and escalating into a much bigger commotion than they had expected.

Chapter Four: Malice Attracted, Again

“! Emergency call 01 from 030440235.”

The female staff member's report, which sounded like a scream, spread like a murmur throughout all the staff at the Academy's huge central control center, which was likely to cover the entire Makuhari Messe building. **(TN: A Convention Center in Chiba, 1,814,560 sq. ft.)**

“No way…01, a major battle?!”

The chief air traffic controller's tense face became even more tense.

“Hurry and check the location and situation.”

The lone commander with a calm expression spoke as if to scold the others for their flustered behavior.

“My God… there hasn't been an 01 call in the Academy in thousands of years.”

“Calm down. No such signs have been reported.” The Commander scolded the central staff, who still could not hide their agitation.

(But I still have some concerns.)

The Academy was a place where dangers like this were constantly lurking, with many problems arising from collective or personal feuds caused by a diverse range of races, tribes, religions, customs, and academic cliques.

“Commander, this may be retaliation for the recent mass capture of pirates.”

“Hmm…” He nodded at the Chief Controller's words. But there was another possibility…

“Location identified!”

“Where is it?!” The chief controller couldn't help but shout out at the operator's words.

“That's… the GP Academy boys' dormitory.”

“What?”

The head air traffic controller's tension eased, and the staff around him chuckled.

“Any communication from the dorm?”

“No.”

“I’m sure there's nothing to worry about. But still, this is the first time the 01 has been issued.”

Hearing the Chief Controller's words, most of the staff returned their attention to their

duties. As long as it didn't involve the Academy's biggest troublemaker, the Philosophy Department, there wouldn't be much of a problem.

“Any other calls?”

“No, only from car 5. There was no call from us so we think there may be a malfunction. The car is currently heading south from the dormitory.”

“So the escape was a success. Have a nice night boys…”

The Commander smiled at the Chief Controller as he remembered his own student days.

“Got it. Cancel the call.”

A small island less than two kilometers in circumference, connected to the mainland where the Academy facilities were located by a highway stretching out over 10 kilometers, made of natural rocks - it was an ultra-luxury villa area with a vast coral reef and beautiful scenery.

Amane's newly purchased penthouse was located at the top of a multi-story apartment building carved into the huge rock formation that covered almost the entire island.

“Ahhhhh… so boring!!”

Amane, lying on the sofa in her private room on the top floor wearing only a large T-shirt and pants, stretched out loud and yelled.

“Everyone's so busy. I'm so unlucky.”

She wanted to invite some friends over for a small party to celebrate her move, but everyone she asked declined, saying they were too busy.

“Well… most schools and companies have their entrance ceremonies tomorrow…” She muttered trying to convince herself.

(There are people with no friends at all.)

The real reason her friends were so busy was because they didn't want to have to listen to Amane's complaints.

She slid off the sofa, exhausted, like a slug onto the fluffy bio-carpet. The soft, moss-like feel and the pleasant, green scent of the living organism soothed her frayed mind.

“Hmm….Huh?”

At that moment, a clear call sound like wind chimes began to ring.

“Who is it?”

That voice was the signal that the call was being received. A monitor turned on above Amane's head as she lay there.

“Hey, my Ama…”

The voice stopped there. The monitor shattered and Amane stood before it, fists clenched. She then slowly stripped off her clothes, tossed five or six GP military anti-biological contamination grenades into the room, sealed the door, and ran into the shower room.

“Aaaaaaaaah! Damn it! I heard a nasty voice!”

While taking a shower, she scrubbed her entire body like a pathological germaphobe.

The voice from earlier was Tennan Seiryo’s. Amane hated Seiryo as much as she hated cockroaches. Especially when she was passed over for promotion to first-class detective and transferred to the Academy as an instructor, which was essentially a demotion, it was only natural that she would be a little overly sensitive.

Amane was not the type of person who usually complained, and the reason why all of her friends refused her invitation was because they knew that she would become an Academy instructor and a colleague of Seiryo.

Drying her hair with a pure white bath towel, she went to another private room wearing only her underwear, and took a sip of her favorite tea, and finally calmed down.

“Why did this have to happen to me…”

The image of Seina's face, unconscious and with an innocent look on his face when they first met on Earth, suddenly came to her mind. His face was covered with small scars, and he was a simple boy, the polar opposite of the refined beauty of the upper class Amane has lived through… but that face made Amane feel very at ease.

“Yeah! I'm going to spend the whole night complaining to the boy who's the root of all this.”

Amane's bad mood from earlier was forgotten, and she called Seina in a happy mood with a big smile on her face. It seemed that Seina had established a soothing, small animal-like status in Amane's mind.

After one ring, a three-dimensional image of the dormitory guide appeared on the screen and began speaking.

“Good evening, this is the Galaxy Academy GP boys' dormitory. We are very sorry, but outside communications are prohibited at this time. In addition…”

“Shut up! This is Urgent! Urgent!”

Using her authority as a teacher, she pushed through and was connected to Seina's room.

“Ah, this bastard, how arrogant of him to sleep.”

She couldn't understand what the logic was, but it seemed that the buoyant mood was getting her high and intoxicated.Of course, her disgust for Seiryo from earlier also added to this.

“Hey! Wake up, Seina!”

She loudly called out to the sleeping Seina, just like a stupid dad who comes home drunk and wakes up his kid.

“This bastard won’t wake up…wait…what?”

Her rare intuition sensed something was amiss, and at the same time, with fluid keystrokes, she made a call to another number.

“What can I do for you, Amane-chan?”

The person who appeared on the monitor was a middle-aged woman who at first glance looked like a man. She wore a white lab coat over a man's suit, rimless glasses, and had even shorter hair than Amane. She was a first-class designer of the Guardian Systems, or GS, and was the former chief designer of the GS division of Kaunaq, which had now been transferred to the Academy.

“My goodness, your father would be so upset if he saw you dressed like this.”

Seeing her with a bath towel draped over her shoulders, she made an exaggerated move to cover her eyes.

“Raireza! Don’t worry about it, just check this out.”

With that, she transferred the data from Seina's dormitory. With her ability, the response should have come within a moment.

“……What happened?”

Asked Raireza anxiously, who was having a bit of trouble.

“Please wait a moment… You're still as perceptive as ever.”

“Is it a dummy?”

“But how did you spot it? It’s pretty good for a… student. …well, that NB was made in a workshop directly under Airi-dono. No wonder the processing speed is so extraordinary.”

“So, Seina…”

“The escape… appears to have been successful.”

“I see… so that means their destination is…”

The cone-shaped city reflected in the window – that was definitely where he was heading. She quickly stood up and started looking through her closet for clothes.

“Even so, I didn't know that girls like younger men.”

“It’s not like that!”

She glared at Raireza, who was laughing loudly.

“Now there's a rumor about that Yamada Seina boy …… but what about the Tennan family's boy?”

“I'd love to throw him into the Academy’s sun! Didn't I tell you never to bring up that idiot again?” Amane exclaimed.

“I'm sorry you don't like him, that little boy. But he's not a bad boy. He's funny.”

“That may be true from the outside, but I don't want to spend my whole life with a clown!”

“Kuku… That's an accurate description.”

Watching Amane get ready, Raireza's smile suddenly turned serious.

(Hmm… that's pretty thorough.)

Amane, a former top model, knew how to make the most of herself in any situation when it came to makeup and clothes. She never hesitated or fretted over how to look her best. But this time, she had already exceeded the average time Raireza knew it should take Amane to get ready.

“Hmph… hey girl. It's fine to tease your friends, but make sure you don't get sucked in.”

“I told you it’s not like that! And don't tell my dad… Yeah, okay!”

Finally, Amane checked herself from every angle and nodded in satisfaction. Even though she was the same sex as Raireza, who had known her since childhood, she was captivated by her appearance. And with that, Amane stormed out of the room.

“It's okay to keep it a secret… but… oh, she's already gone.” Staring into the empty room, Raireza muttered before turning off the monitor.

“Even if you tell me to keep quiet… it’s impossible for them not to find out after such a

conspicuous standoff with Miss Kiriko.” While muttering this, she stopped her hand that was reaching out for the switch.

“…Hmm.”

A mysterious light shone in Raireza's eyes as she looked at the NB. It was the same look that Seto and Airi had when they come up with some evil plan.

For the time being, there was someone even more troublesome than Amane's father: Tennan Seiryo, the clown who had appeared in their conversation earlier.

“Damn you, Yamada Seina! You're just an Earthling and you dare lay your hands on my Amane!”

Tennan Seiryo was on the roof of his penthouse home, a brightly colored and tasteless house, howling into the night sky like a cat in heat, not caring about disturbing his neighbors, while slamming a third-rate gossip article about the incident involving the three-way battle between Amane, Kiriko, and Seina onto the floor.

“This! This! This! This! This! This!”

Then, after stepping on the magazine - specifically the part with Yamada Seina's picture in it - about twenty or thirty times, he felt a little better, and finally noticed something strange about the three people in it.

“Hmph… What the hell am I… Why am I getting so worked up over some primitive monkey from a tiny remote planet like this?”

At that moment, Seiryo's vision was intentionally adjusted and Seina looked like Amane's pet monkey. He wasn’t sure if it was easy to understand, but it was like Amane wearing the popular on her arm.

(TN: An inflatable doll popular in the 1906’s.)

“Hu……hahahah

“I need to be a man and speak my mind. Ha ha ha!”

…And that lead to Amane's sudden destruction of the monitor.

It would be a waste of time to write about Seiryo's actions after this, so we’ll just ignore them.

“Damn you, Yamada Seina! I'll take that stray cat to the health center myself!”

So, when Seiryo heard that Seina had escaped from the dorm, he also set off into the city.

There were few houses and other facilities around the GP Academy, and almost no artificial lights. Moreover, that night was a new moon, so the surroundings were pitch black. The stars scattered across the sky were blocked by the steep cliffs of the canyon. The highway, which seemed to be floating in such pitch black darkness, was lit up by street lights like the glow of fireflies, and it looked like a road leading to another world that might appear in a fantastical fairy tale.

“The night breeze feels good.”

In the back seat of a battered air car, which seemed out of place in the fantastical atmosphere, Kenneth and Rajau were rubbing their cheeks and enjoying the breeze.

(It feels like a scene from an American teen movie.)

It was a little chilly, but it felt good on his body, which was hot and sweaty after all that running around. However, Seina looked worried.

“Seina, the car is now in automatic mode, so you don’t need to watch the steering wheel.”

Seina's eyes are fixed on the steering wheel, which was moving automatically.

“Yeah… hey, is the dorm okay?”

“You mean about breaking the dock entrance?”

“That and many other things……”

“It's fine. The people who were too late to escape will have it repaired, and by the time we get back from having fun it will be back to normal. Don't worry, don't worry.”

“Yes. That's the rule, so don't worry about it.”

“……I see……”

Seeing the two of them laughing without a care, Seina sighed in resignation.

“But if there are rules, won't I get in trouble for driving a car like this?”

The roof was blown off and the car was dented in so many places that it was almost surprising to see it still running.

“Hey, this is a GP car.”

“Of course, if they found out, they’ll be angry.”

“Well then… then, somewhere…”

“Well, since you’re running safely, it’s okay! You might get a stern warning, but you won’t be forced back to the dorms, so it’s okay. But anyway, look over there!”

Seina wasn't convinced by Kenneth's confident words, but he looked in the direction he was pointing.

“Wow…” He couldn't help but sigh in admiration.

Seina's eyes were drawn to a beautiful illuminated cityscape hidden in the canyon. Urban lighting was essentially nothing more than a collection of miscellaneous lights, but in the Academy, the nighttime lighting was also controlled on a city-wide scale. Moreover, because the air was clean, there was no unnecessary reflected light in the sky. It was no exaggeration to say that the lights that emerged in the pitch-dark darkness were a work of art.

The road to another world led to the Crystal Cathedral.

“Are you glad that you came?”

Captivated by the magnificent view, Seina nodded silently.

“Well, the real fun is just beginning. Ahahaha! …. Whoa!”

Kenneth leaned forward out of the car.

An air car with girls in it was coming up next to them. It was like Cinderella on her way to the ball, so it was polite to invite them to dance.

“Hey girls, where are you going? To a party?”

Kenneth and Rajau smiled at the women with ease.

“Ahhhh!!”

However, when they saw Kenneth and Rajau, the expressions on the women's faces, which had been beaming with smiles until a moment ago, suddenly distorted like demons.

“Ah! They…”

With a real scream, the girl's air-car sped up rapidly and drove away, not caring that the body of the car collided with the walls or pavement.

“I guess it's no good after all…”

Kenneth rubbed his cheek and watched the air car go by, emitting nasty noises and sparks every now and then, then his shoulders slumped in disappointment.

“That's… a really impressive mark.” Seina muttered after witnessing the power of it.

“Well… at this rate I won't be able to go to parties, let alone pick up girls.”

“It's not an easy thing to take, though…”

Rajau smiled, “Right!” I have a great idea!”

“?”

“No! It doesn’t accept my commands. It seems that their system is superior to ours.”

Meanwhile, the Academy's central control center was in chaos.

They were desperately trying to stop a large-scale combat deployment about to be made by an external command access to the central control center.

“That's so stupid… there can't be a system higher than this one.” The chief controller, his face pale, sat down, holding his head.

“What’s the situation?” The Commander was also nervous and had sweat running down his forehead.

“There's no doubt that the PIN code contained in the previous call is the cause. We're currently investigating it, so please wait…”

Below the command block on high ground, several hundred personnel were checking roughly 10,000 years' worth of data.

“Really… the need for a fundamental unification of the system has been something people have been saying for a long time…”

“This is the biggest problem for the Academy. It has become a den of complicated and bizarre interests, so the only people who can reconcile opinions are the legendary Philosophers Hakubi Washu and Akara Naja.”

“Half of those machines over there are the ones I saw in museums when I was in grade school.” He mumbled in a self-deprecating tone.

“Well, it's data from 10,000 years ago after all… the current mainstream standard template was released 5,000 years ago, and there are thousands of storage media from before that.”

“You can't read it unless you remove the hard protection.”

“Commander! I found it!” One of the people checking shouted.

“Wow! Great job!”

“That was pretty quick.”

“Our staff is great. So what's the problem?”

“It appears that the call was sent through another system before it was sent to us. It appears that it interpreted our call cut-off as an indication that the headquarters had been destroyed or occupied by the enemy, and so began to operate.”

“Another system? Do you know what it is?”

“Inside the Gates of 33.”

“!! … The Master Guard of the Philosophy Department?”

It was a repository of all kinds of knowledge, built by 33 Philosophers who graduated from the Philosophy Department and were called Masters for their abilities, and a guard system to protect it.

“This is the worst case scenario we could have ever imagined.”

“Damn! Then whatever you're trying to do is futile… Program load for major battle! Make it look like you've regained control.”

“But!”

“We're in danger if we don't regain control! We need to put bells on those Philosophy Department systems, who knows what they'll do.”

“Roger that!”

The Philosophy Department's infamy was absolute. The operator hastily turned back to his console.

“Loading program.” He typed on the keyboard with quick fingers.

“…Partial control has been regained! Communications have been secured. However, the majority of the system is still frozen.”

“Okay, let's resume intelligence gathering. Then, all relevant parties should conduct an unannounced drill for large-scale combat!”

“Unannounced training…?”

“Just think of it as a good opportunity.” He answered in a desperate tone.

“Command! We have identified the student in that vehicle. Kenneth Bāru. Rajau Ga Waura…”

“You've done something really troublesome… I've never seen anything like this before.”

Suddenly, a bad feeling crossed his mind. Also, the operator was acting strangely.

“But wait. Aren't Academy students supposed to travel in groups of three?”

“…The other person is…the aforementioned Yamada Seina.”

“Y-Yamada…Seina…”

Following the operator, the commander was now at a loss for words.

“Anyone who's near the target vehicle, send them over! We need to stop the call.”

Reports were constantly coming in to the president's office from each relevant department.

“The Master Guard from the Philosophy Department…how troublesome.”

Mikami glared at her with a dirty look, while Airi tried desperately to hide it.

“Don’t look at me like that. It’s not just my fault. If the trigger was Seina-kun… well, these things happen…”

In fact, she was one of the people who founded the Master Guard system.

“What does Washu-sama say?”

“She said, ‘Let me see what you can do♡’.”

“So you're saying we have to do something about it…” Mikami sighed heavily.

“Hahaha. Well, I guess we’ll manage it somehow…”

A few kilometers behind the small patrol car Seina and his friends were riding in, a GP patrol car with two female police officers inside was pursuing them.

“Hey, why do we have to chase after kids who managed to escape?”

The policewoman in the passenger seat, leaned her chin on the open window, gave her partner a bored look.

“The mini patrol car they are driving is malfunctioning and keeps making false emergency calls. We’'ve got orders to stop it!”

The very serious-looking policewoman spoke with a dumbfounded look on her face while still facing straight ahead.

“What about comms?”

“That’s broken too! That's why they gave us the order.”

“I see that. Hey, isn't that boy one of those boys who escaped?”

“Yamada Seina-kun, right?”

“When we're done with work, why don't you and Seina and I sneak into a party somewhere?”

“You know, they’re just kids.”

“Well, as his senior, I have to teach him how to properly enjoy the evening. Besides, you're interested in young heroes too, right?”

“You…?!”

Then the highway lights went down.

“Ahhh! What? A power outage??”

On a quiet night, only the emergency line stood out in the pitch black darkness.

“What's this? A power outage on the highway?”

It was a new moon night, and the city that was supposed to be nearby was hidden behind the mountains. They were also deep in the forest, so the pitch black, claustrophobic atmosphere with no view to the starry sky created a rather eerie atmosphere.

“…Hey… in my country…”

“Stop it. Is this the time to tell ghost stories?”

No matter how much science advanced, the supernatural still had a firm place in it. As long as humans wanted entertainment, there would also be fear. Most people didn't want their entertainment, called wonder, to be explained by science.

“On a moonless night like this.”

“I told you to stop! I'm not good with that kind of talk.”

At that moment, what suddenly emerged in the headlights was a car covered in embarrassing markings and a creepy human head wearing a paper bag.

“Kyaaa

“What the hell??”

And then the situation got even worse.

“Commander! All air, naval and land units of the Academy's Second Mobile Force stationed on the home planet have been scrambled!”

“That's ridiculous! Such an order… Could it have come from the Master Guard?”

“The targets of the attack are Officer Carroll, who is currently firing, and Officer Ameri, and the villa owned by Chairman Airi of “Broken Plates”!”

“Kiriko-san, it seems that your unauthorized access has been discovered. What will you do?”

Mikami's tone sounded somewhat like it was none of her business.

“You don't have to say it so coldly… Even though Kiriko-chan isn't at home, we still have to help those two officers…”

“There's no time to think.”

“However, shooting in a place like that would be a nuisance to the neighbors, so we need to create a decoy… an enemy. Also, Principal Mikami, please give orders to the Central Control Center to not lay hands on Seina and the others.”

“I understand.”

“Then Ringo, I want Hakuren and her team to clear the way so that no one bothers Seina-kun and his friends.”

“I understand.” Ringo bowed respectfully and left the room.

“Now then. I want to make it a flashy one, but… well, for now… I think it's better to get this over with quickly.”

“Central Control Center, this is 2078. We will soon reach the target… are you sure you want to attack?”

The pilots of the first two planes that had been scrambled were communicating with each other in a bewildered manner.

“We have received word from Chairman Airi that another target has been set. For now, prioritize Master Guard's orders.”

“Another target? Ah… Ah, that's it.”

The pilot saw the lake right in front of Airi’s Villa begin to churn, and a flying object emerge

from the churn.

“…Central Control Center…Target spotted”

What took off from the lake, making a strange whirring sound effect, was what was commonly known as a flying saucer.

“…Seriously?”

It suddenly flew away at incredible speed in front of the stunned pilot.

“Confirming target change order from Master Guard. Will pursue.”

“……”

Seina looked up in silence at the city, glittering with its brilliant illuminations.

From afar, the beautiful artworks looked nothing like the station buildings Seina had seen up until now, so there was nothing particularly special about them once they entered the city. However…

“Today's festival is pretty extravagant.” Kenneth shouted excitedly with a big smile on his face.

That was because large formation of planes was roaring through the sky, and gunfire could be heard in the distance.

“But that's a military-grade fighter jet, fully armed. It seems a bit odd to have in a parade.”

“Oh! It must be a military anniversary!”

“I see!”

“I see... Something's a little off.”

“Seina! What's important to us right now is to enjoy this night, not to resolve our doubts.”

“Exactly!”

"Well, that being said... you seem to have been really conspicuous for a while now..."

He was the center of attention and the subject of ridicule.

Next to Seina, who looked embarrassed and small, were Kenneth and Rajau, wearing paper bags with holes for their eyes and mouths and suspicious caricatures of their heads, calling out to all the women in the vicinity.

“That's weird. The mark is hidden, so why are they screaming and running away?”

“Isn't that strange?”

“…Kenneth and Rajau don't you think there's anything strange about the paper bag…?”

“Should I have drawn the hair too?”

“Yeah… maybe.”

“You know… you got shot at by a policewoman just now.”

“Don't worry about small things. A man is judged by what's inside, not how he looks! Hahahahaha~”

“That's right. Hahahaha~”

Kenneth and Rajau laughed heartily and slapped Seina on the back.

“……”

With a look of resignation on his face, Seina stared at the car, which had almost no armor left and was so dilapidated that it was strange that it was still moving.

After being shot at by a pair of policewomen earlier, he ran off the highway into the forest, and despite bumped into things here and there. He managed to shake off their pursuit and finally made it into the town.

“Hey Rajau. Those policewomen… are they okay? It looks like their car hit a tree.”

“They continued to fire at us after that, so we're safe.”

“I see… that's true.”

He looked back at the battered car and felt a sense of affinity with it, seeing it still running smoothly despite its condition.

“You did your best… Thank you… Huh?”

It was only then that he finally noticed that the little bit of armor it had left had the embarrassing markings all over it. The real reason everyone was paying attention and women ran away was because of the embarrassing markings.

Gon!

The gyro must have gone haywire, as the autopilot car crashed into a streetlight pole. It started to emit white smoke and eventually stopped moving. It was at this point that the 01 call that had been coming from the car finally stopped.

Kiriko arrived in town just as the 01 call stopped.

She looked around and created a barrier spot in the hustle and bustle of town, in a stagnant area where people were flowing.

“So where is Seina-chan…?”

Entering the barrier, Kiriko casually activated what appeared to be a map of the city, but it was actually an access screen for the Academy's highest surveillance mechanism, which Kiriko should not have even known existed at her level. This system oversees the multi-sensor system that covered the entire Academy and tracked the actions of everyone in the Academy.

“Ugh!”

She spoke in a straightforward, unadorned voice, which immediately broke through her barrier and drew everyone's attention.

(Damn it!)

She quickly ran to the nearest transport port.

She moved to a different location and activated the monitor inside a newly created barrier.

It showed that many people from all over the Academy were moving towards one particular point.

“A large scale combat exercise?”

She collapsed to the ground, exhausted, because she had learned that a large-scale battle was about to break out due to the 01 call made by Seina and the boys' mini-patrol car.

“I thought it was odd that we didn't receive any information about the exercise beforehand…huh?”

But things didn't end there.

“…The policewomen who tried to stop it saw something and became confused, and sent out information about Seina-chan indiscriminately… Were they confused?”

She didn't know what happened, maybe it was just Seina's bad luck? But as a result, it became widely known that he was in the city.

“I'm a bit worried about the large-scale battles, but… as long as Airi-sama doesn't summon me, it's not a problem.”

Even though Seina was the initial catalyst, it wasn’t his fault, so there was no need to worry about it. More importantly...

“Almost all of the habitual human hunters on the blacklist…”

There was no doubt that they were heading for Seina, and it wasn't just the regulars who

were heading there, there were ten times as many.

“I feel dizzy…”

It was a repeat of the pirate incident the other day.

“Judging from their behavior patterns, most of them are probably just onlookers... The rest are probably people who aren't known as habitual offenders...!!”

As she was thinking this, some of the dots of light that had been displayed until a moment ago disappeared. It seemed that some of the people noticed that they were being traced.

“Just to be sure…”

Only a handful of people knew about the existence of the highest level surveillance system that Kiriko was currently accessing. She wanted to make sure that those who would have known about the system were involved.

“There are two people who are most likely involved… but… they are openly hosting the Seina capture event, so I don’t see any need to be gentle.”

The event was prominently advertised on their homepage.

“I don't have time to check everything one by one.”

But Kiriko was sure. And she was pulling this data from a place it shouldn't have access to. So the conclusion was simple.

“Ah…”

With a deep sigh, she slumped down.

“I was just supposed to be chasing after Seina, but I never expected to end up fighting a real information war…”

That's right. The owners of the disappearing light spots were national intelligence level professionals, just like Kiriko.

“But… that's why it's Seina-chan.”

Considering the pirate incident a few days ago, this was something to be expected.

Pushing her worries about Seina to the back of her mind, she immediately contacted Mikami. Her main purpose was to request her assistance in arresting the human hunter deviants who were pursuing Seina, but she also wanted to confirm the Academy's overall investigation plan.

(Well, it's more reliable to eliminate the people hunting humans than to protect Seina, whose behavior is hard to predict…)

In order to counter spies and criminals operating in the Academy, from nations to

individuals, there was an absolute supreme department that monitored and issued instructions on all investigations, but the investigation plans were diverse and complex. There were many targets that were deliberately left untouched, and the agency existed to determine whether they would interfere with other investigations or to ask for changes to the plan. Even if it was a personal matter involving Seina, it was only natural to ask for instructions when it was as large as this one.

“That's perfect. I was just about to contact you.”

Behind the flustered Mikami, a lot of angry shouts could be heard. As expected, it seemed that there was a big commotion.

“I'm so sorry. I'm sorry for the inconvenience caused by Seina…”

“Hohoho, it's perfect for surprise training. Kiriko-san, please prioritize securing the group that is after Seina-kun. Seto-sama has dispatched Hakuren and her team, so you will be in charge of Karen and Gyokuren, and Airi-sama will be in charge of Hakuren and Suiren.”

“Hakuren and her team?! But…”

“You're probably surprised.”

“Even lending one person is an incredible deal, but four people…”

“Be careful. Seto-sama has decided that it is necessary.”

“Understood.”

Following Mikami's instructions, Kiriko blended into the darkness like a tiger on the hunt.

“Four people, huh. ...Actually, there's one more person, but... Ho ho ho, let's keep her a secret.”

“Well, I guess I won't find it if I just search randomly…”

On the way to town in a small cruiser, Amane started accessing the Internet.

“Oh… there they are… there are so many of them.”

The internet was flooded with information exchanges between people hunting human subjects. Of course, the most common target was Seina.

“Hmm…”

Of course, there was a mixture of fact and fiction. Amane picked out the information she thought was most reliable. While Kiriko relied on strong experience, Amane's weapon was her rare intuition. As long as she had reliable information, it was easy for her to trace the movements of a person… but…

“That's strange. With so much information, it would be obvious…but no way!”

She checked the information she picked up again.

“Is someone disrupting it?”

She scrolled through the data she picked up again quickly like a speed reader, skimming through it and re-picking everything based on intuition alone.

“Kiriko, that girl~~~”

All that became clear was that it was Kiriko who was causing the disruption.

“If it's Kiriko who's causing the disturbance, then there's no point in doing this.”

As she said that, she loaded a map of the city and stared at it. Her head pieced together the location of Seina's dorm, the route to the city, and information about the party that was going to be held that night.

“Yes! Here!!”

She pointed to a point on the map. Amane's intuition was incredible. She pointed almost exactly to where Seina was.

Now, the last competitor, Seiryo, had set out to find Seina at almost the same time as the other two, but he was far behind. And the reason for this was unfolding before his eyes.

“My finest men! Thank you for gathering here!”

The people gathered on Seiryo's large assault interceptor were Amane and Kiriko's fan club members who felt a sense of crisis about Seina.

(Heh heh heh. How foolish… This is why ignorant people are so easy to handle.)

Seiryo was intoxicated by his ability to manipulate so many fan club members.

(The word “idiot” should be used appropriately. This is how a leader should win people's hearts.)

For the time being, the only way to counter Amane's search techniques was to use human wave tactics. He thought that if he acted recklessly as a young man, he could kill Seina… or at worst, he could get him banished or unable to recover.

(It's not good for a teacher to reveal private feelings to a student, but he's not a GP student yet! So exterminating the pest is inevitable!)

But in the end, he was a man who had crossed the line (according to Airi).

“However, I don't think a group of people who are in love with a woman who doesn't belong

to them should exist… but as a man, I can understand your feelings for Amane. And I'm not so narrow-minded that I can't tolerate something like that, hahaha.”

He was so intoxicated with himself that at the end he blurted out his true feelings, just like the foolish little animal from the old Tale of Inaba. **(TN: Japanese myth)**

“…Hmm? What's the matter, guys?” Seiryo noticed something strange and turned around.

Plop!

Well, to be honest, Seiryo was not the type of person that male students liked. He was quickly beaten mercilessly, and the fan club members who had turned into a mob also took over Seiryo's prized all-purpose armored battleship.

“I'm glad I came even though I didn't think it would work.”

“I can't believe you were able to get in through all that debris.”

The first place Kenneth and the boys headed to was the “Imuimu” venue.

Kenneth and Rajau were in high spirits in the lobby of a luxurious hotel, looking around happily as they wanderied around.

“It hasn't been decided yet, right?”

Even though they were out of place, Seina sat uncomfortably on the sofa as the two of them continued to cheerfully carry on with their paper bags still on their heads.

“Hey, the receptionist said we could enter if our names matched the certificate.”

“Well, that's true…”

“Don't worry, don't worry! The fun is coming soon.”

The two of them sat on either side of Seina and patted him on the shoulders.

“Yeah… but… what kind of place is 'Imuimu'?”

“Oh, I haven't explained it yet? Listen carefully, Seina. Imuimu refers to a gathering of elite members on the super-famous resort ocean planet ‘Imu’ in Juraian territory.”

“Inside this dome, which is about five kilometers in diameter and one kilometer high, an environment similar to that of ”Imuimu“ has been created. In the open atmosphere of the southern country of ‘Im’... Ugh!”

Although Seina couldn't see his face because of the paper bag, it was probably bright red, and he started making strange noises and wagging his tail.

“Today there's a party for Imuimu. Rumor has it that couples will be formed at the party and

stay together until the morning… and there are a lot of famous celebrities and models among the members. If all goes well… hehehe!”

Kenneth also started waving his hands around, chuckling oddly.

“Thank you for your patience.”

A man dressed in a chic uniform and looking like an aristocratic butler spoke to them.

“Unfortunately, we have discovered that this invitation is a counterfeit.”

“Huh!”

Kenneth and Rajau suddenly went from being excited to frozen, turning pale.

“The truth is, sophisticated counterfeit tickets have been circulating recently.”

“So you mean I was deceived?”

“I'm sorry to hear that.”

“I… Imuimu~~~”

Kenneth and Rajau looked up to the sky and cried.

“The target has been shot down. The two officers abducted by the target were transferred to the Chairman's office before being shot down, and were confirmed safe.”

“Master Guard. We have now transitioned to standby orders.”

“I see, that was tough work… But it was really hard to shoot down just one target.”

The Second Task Force was scrambled, and the commander on the bridge of the command ship “Oberyn” sighed quietly after receiving the operator's report.

“Because Chairwoman Airi played around. Well, in order to fool Master Guard, it would be a problem if it ended too easily...”

“You were one of Chairwoman Airi's students. No, I'm not blaming you. You were the perfect choice for practical training.”

“This data could potentially lead to future fleet reorganizations…” He whispered in the Commander's ear.

“I see…But even so, those guys in the Philosophy Department are really a pain.” The commander, relieved of tension, complained to his adjutant.

“But it seems that the original cause was Yamada Seina. Apparently there was some trouble when he escaped from the dormitory.”

“Hmm, so it was an escape from the dorms… I guess that can't be helped. I remember that too.”

“Hahaha, the Commander too?”

“Commander! A small cruiser is moving at high speed ahead at 2041.” The bridge operator reported.

“Amane Kaunaq, second-class detective… no, currently an instructor at the Academy. I hear you are heading to City 773 to protect the students. Would you like to give the order to evacuate the area of operation?”

“What are your orders from Central Control…or rather, Master Guard?”

“The status quo remains.”

“Well, that's ok. Let her through.”

“Roger that…!! Commander! A battleship-class vessel of unknown affiliation has been detected at 09, 9981! It belongs to the Tennan family's private army, but no operational plan has been issued!” The operator's words caused tensions to rise on the bridge again.

“Target not responding!”

“Keep calling! Contact the Tennan family!”

“Commander! Master Guard has ordered us to attack!” The deputy shouted.

“A theft report has been filed from the Tennan home!”

“What was the response from the target?”

“There is none!”

“If we delay any longer, Master Guard may take control!” The lieutenant's voice was almost a shriek.

“Damn! Give the order to all ships to attack! But only warning shots, avoid direct hits!!”

“Go! Break through! Our passion for these girls won't be stopped by something like this!”

There was nothing more troublesome than the fanatical group psychology associated with religion and revolution. Even while under massive simultaneous attack from the fleet's resonance shells, there was no room for them to think of stopping the ship or evading the attack.

“GO!!”

And with that, they foolishly charged straight towards the city.

What was worse was that the performance of Seiryo's pride and joy, the all-purpose assault armored battleship, was surprisingly good. Even though its important parts and exterior had been destroyed by resonance shells, it was still sailing with neither its speed nor its functionality impaired.

“They’ve broken through the defense line! Target speed and course remain unchanged!”

“Have they identified the natural vibration waves of the engine yet?!”

“There are only 2,000 candidates left!”

“We won't make it in time! Commander, give the order to sink them!”

“We've definitely done some damage. The city guards will buy us some time.”

“No! City defenses are not working!”

“What?!”

Seiryo's prized all-purpose armored battleship crashed into the city base, which was partially malfunctioning due to Seina and its safety shutdown mechanism had gone dead.

The fan club army was defeated.

But he wasn't dead.

“This guy did it again with flair……” The captain of the mobile rescue team that had rushed to the foundation building blocks of the city where Seiryo's prized all-purpose assault armored battleship had crashed into couldn't help but mutter.

“Captain, what do you want me to do?”

“Request the S-class equipped Mobile Rescue Battalion! We will begin precision scanning while ensuring the safety of the scene. Prioritize vital signs! Release all N-probes to maintain vital signs!”

“Commander! I've detected motion.”

“A survivor?… What happened??”

“……Hehehehe…… Wahahahahahaha~~~~~~”

“L-laughing?!”

They had no idea what it was doing in the water, but an eerie, foolish laugh came closer.

“I-it’s coming closer!”

The rescue reconnaissance team members who rushed to the scene were stunned as Seiryo rose from the sea like a zombie!

“Wahahahahahaha~~~~~!!”

“Hey, are you okay?!”

“Shut up and get out of my way!”

The fool knocked down the GP officer who tried to stop him and disappeared into the dark night in search of prey.

Chapter Five: Widow

As they moved from the “Imuimu” reception area to the terrace of the coffee shop, Seina felt a slight tremor.

“What was that…that?”

However, he had no idea that the tremors he felt were caused by Seiryo.

Although the accident was quite spectacular, it felt like nothing more than a minor earthquake to a city-class battleship. However, Seina felt uneasy about being here.

(I should move too…)

Now all alone, Seina wondered whether he should go inside the store.

“But even if I go in… I'm worried that I'll be a nuisance to other people…”

There were no customers on the terrace where Seina was.

“By the way… how long are those two going to be in the bathroom?”

After realizing that the invitation to “Imuimu” was fake, the person in charge felt sorry for them and gave them a bunch of free tickets to the coffee shop.

Kenneth and Rajau had been here eating in desperation until just now, but when other customers saw the strange duo with paper bags on their heads eating in desperation and crying, they quickly left the cafe or moved inside.

However, it seemed that the two of them also had stomach problems because of it, and they went to the bathroom together and hadn’t come back.

“I guess... I should stay here, right?”

As he was mumbling that,

“Oh, are you alone?” A woman called out to Seina.

Unknown to Seina, she was the woman David had called “the Oyasama’s secretary.”

“Good evening.”

“G-good evening.”

Seina, who had been admiring the woman, quickly returned the greeting. She wasn't beautiful or flashy, but there was something about her that made her stand out… No, she was attractive. And it wasn't just Seina who was impressed. People passing by, both men and women, were looking at her.

Her gentle smile and somewhat elegant aura reminded him of Seto and Mikami. However, when she sensed the gaze of passersby, she casually moved to another position.

“!?”

A chill ran down Seina's spine.

This was because the woman, who had been attracting attention, had inadvertently slipped into people's blind spots. However, Seina himself wasn’t aware of this. It was just that he felt as if her true nature had been revealed as she slipped into the darkness of the blind spot.

(……What?)

Her appearance was human, but there was something fundamentally different about it.

There was no doubt that anyone approaching Seina right now was a human hunter, and they were an extremely dangerous type of human who had slipped through Kiriko's net.

(Oh, did you notice?) She saw a hint of caution in Seina's eyes. (I see, so since you attract bad luck, you’re quite sensitive.)

“Excuse me. You must be Yamada Seina-san, right?”

“Yes, that's right.”

The fact that she knew him meant that she had some kind of purpose - this convinced him

to the contrary and made him less wary of her.

“Is it ok to sit next to you?”

“Ah…”

Keenly sensing this, she skillfully got into Seina's good graces.

At this point, Seina was practically an insect caught in a spider's web. But just as she sat down, the impact of Seiryo's battleship crashing into the foundations of the city was amplified by a number of factors, causing pieces of the structure to fall to the ground, some ten meters tall.

“!!”

With an impact like a major earthquake and a thunderous roar, the debris crushed an empty table a few meters away from Seina, sunk into the floor, and came crashing down toward them.

The violent shaking caused her to delay her reaction for a split second, more than enough time to get caught up in Seina's bad luck.

(I can't run away with this child. There will be someone who will pay a high price for the corpse.)

Sitting next to Seina, she made that decision and tried to avoid the huge mass with agile movements.

“Look out!”

Seina shouted and grabbed her hand as she tried to run away.

“!!”

It was an exquisite position and timing that the bio-enhanced women couldn't shake off.

(Even if I cut off this child's hand, I won't be able to escape…)

Surprisingly, she was quick to admit that she couldn't be saved, but when she saw Seina, there was something there that frightened even her.

(!!!!!!!!!)

Seina stood calmly in a space where even she had given up, where death would surely take them. In fact, he was the only one not fightened.

For a woman who had absolute confidence in her own judgment, this was both confusing

and frightening. It was a clear and unreasonable discomfort, different from the unidentifiable discomfort Seina felt towards her, due to his ignorance and immaturity.

(The Grim Reaper?)

The moment she felt this, the fragment that was falling suddenly stopped moving as if it had caught on something. However, the center of the fragment broke into pieces, and several fragments, each several meters in size, flew over the two of them.

DOGAGAGUAAAAAANNNN!!

The wind pressure mussed her hair, and the sound of the overwhelming mass crashing into something echoed along with tremendous vibrations.

"…… Ah."

She stared at the spot where the dusty debris had pierced the ground—it was precisely the place she had deemed safe and tried to escape to.

"……!!"

The woman was stunned for a moment, then she noticed the feeling of Seina's hand still holding hers.

(Ah… ah, ahhh)

Her body shivered and her spine… no, her whole body froze. It was an overwhelming fear she had never experienced before. And then, for the first time, she realized something important.

(Why am I here?) It left her feeling very confused.

(Why did I come here?) She reflected on her actions.

(There's nothing strange about it… there's no error of judgment there.) She pondered it over and over again.

(So why am I here?) To her, this violent injustice felt like suddenly being thrown from a place full of light into darkness and weightlessness.

The boy with the shaved head… just a moment ago she had thought of him as nothing more than prey, but her overwhelming superiority had vanished into thin air. What she now had in her hand was undoubtedly something that surpassed even her - something different.

(Damn… ah, ahaha) She was a person who could live alone without relying on anyone.

She had strong principles within herself and the strength to stick to them. And it was through this strength that she has survived. She was also skilled at avoiding crises and had absolute confidence. But that has just been shattered by Seina.

(Haa haa… ahhh… good) It gave her a tremendous sense of fear…but at the same time it also gave her an intense sense of pleasure - yes…she had been truly violated.

“Ahh, that's a surprise… But at this rate, I can't wait for them outside.”

The boy who had destroyed the concept of a single person commented in a somewhat goofy tone about the incredible situation he was faced with.

He took a quick glance inside the store and saw a store clerk, his face pale, running over to them in a panic.

“Well, we have no choice. Let's go inside.”

He said in an even more carefree, relaxed tone. For her, it was truly a collapse of her worldview, but for Seina, it was just an extension of his daily life.

“?… Oh.”

It was only then that she noticed that her eyes were red and watery, and that he was still holding her hand.

Seina and the woman moved inside the store and sat across from each other. The woman had flushed cheeks and beads of sweat on her face, but she kept looking Seina in the eyes.

“I'm sorry for the inconvenience… I mean… that's not what I meant…”

Of course, she got caught up in his bad luck and didn’t realize he was still holding her hand until then.

“Do you always get into this kind of trouble?” Finally she began to speak.

“It's rare to have so many things happen like this.”

“…Well, I suppose so.”

“It was my first time in this place, and my first time in such a big city… hahaha. I'm sure it will be a little less once I get used to it. ....."

“So… this is everyday life for you?” Although she was a little taken aback by Seina's words, she asked with a smile.

"Ah, but I would never keep hold a woman's hand."

Seeing Seina's face flushed and agitated, the woman finally regained her composure.

“Haha. Is it normal to get into an accident like that?”

“…I've had bad luck since I was born…”

“Have you ever been scared?”

“It's something that happens all the time… I'm used to it. But getting other people involved…”

She noticed the small but inconspicuous scars all over his face.

(……I see) Then she realized that Seina was not Death, but a sacrifice bewitched by it.

“I’m deeply moved… I’ll do it.” She muttered with a deep sigh.

“What?”

“Yes, please leave the payment to me.”

She smiled as if she couldn't be happier. The strange feeling Seina had felt toward her earlier had disappeared.

In the principal's office of GP Academy, where Seina would be attending from now on, Kuramitsu Mikami was smiling wryly as she looked at the names of those who were being captured one after another.

“I imagine Seto-sama must have felt this way.”

There were dozens of reports with an impact similar to that of the arrest of the perpetrator of the Fuchu 300 Million Yen Incident. **(TN: The Fuchu 300 million yen incident occurred on December 10, 1968, a cash transport vehicle was attacked in Fuchu, Tokyo, and approximately 300 million yen was stolen. The perpetrator disguised himself as a police motorcycle officer and stole cash under the pretense of planting a bomb.The perpetrator was never arrested, and the statute of limitations expired seven years later, leaving the case unsolved.)**

In other words, it was a piece of cake, and conducting a proper investigation would be ridiculous—which was tantamount to overwhelming violence from the perspective of those who had been conducting thorough investigations.

“Seto-sama had the same expression on her face that Mikami-sama has now.” Ringo, who was sitting in the secretary's seat checking the data, smiled.

“Even I, who am used to Mitoto and Mihoshi, am like this.”

“Haha. I understand how you feel.”

And at that moment, a 3D screen appeared in the center.

“M-Mikami-sama! Sorry for the emergency.” The GP Security Chief, who was in charge of capturing and recovering the large number of human hunters who had been caught up in Seina’s luck, was standing on the other side of the screen looking perturbed.

“What's wrong, why are you in such a hurry?”

The shocking reports continued, and Mikami, who should have been used to it by now, felt something unusual about the chief's behavior.

“AA33485… Widow just turned herself in.”

“What?!” Even Mikami, who was known for her coolness, cried out in surprise.

(Seto-sama had hinted at the possibility of her showing up… but she turned herself in?)

“Have you reported this to Airi-sama?”

“Yes, just now. However, she is currently very busy, so she has decided to leave it to Mikami-sama.”

“…I see. I understand.”

“Since then, there have been reports of ten more arrests… and seven bodies.”

“? I see, please continue your investigation. I'd like to meet her. Please transfer her to me.”

With that, Mikami stood up.

(…She looks like the real thing.)

The woman in front of her was calm and had the air of a saint who could attract attention or perhaps even the soul. That was something that Seto shared as well. That's why Mikami decided that she was the real deal.

“Since when has Kuramitsu Mikami become a gossip reporter?”

Although she was smiling, her question was mixed with contempt, so she carefully distanced herself and released the binding barrier. If she was the real deal, this would have been as dangerous as releasing a tiger into the wild, but it was a polite gesture to ask a question out of curiosity.

“Please.” She gestured to the sofa in front of her.

“Excuse me.”

The look of contempt disappeared from her face as she bowed gracefully and sat down on the sofa.

“Ringo-san. I'm going to have to ask you to leave us for a moment.”

“…… Understood.”

Ringo hesitated for a moment after hearing Mikami's words, but then she immediately got

up and tried to go outside. However, Widow called out to her.

“No, please join us. The Demon Princess' treasurer… Tatsuki Ringo.”

Chasing human hunters ultimately meant chasing Seina.

“Seina-chan!”

After Kiriko had arrested around fifty people, she finally caught up with Seina, who was walking alone.

“Ah, Kiriko-san.”

“?… Who are you?”

When Seina turned around, Kiriko felt something was off.

“W-Who am I? I'm Yamada Seina…”

“It’s no use. Do you think that kind of acting will work on me?”

A hint of murderous intent rose within Kiriko.

“Okay. I give up.”

It was Elma wearing Seina's pseudo-personal form.

“As expected of Kiriko-san. The others were fooled though.”

“How many years do you think I've been with Seina-chan? And more importantly, why were you disguised as Seina?”

“Oh, that’s a scary face.”

“Answer the question! No way, you too ....."

"Really scary face. I'm getting a little freaked out."

Kiriko's expression became even more tense at the teasing tone.

“Elma!”

“We're trying to catch the hunters who are chasing Seina-kun.”

Elma, realizing that it would be dangerous to tease Kiriko any further, gave her an answer that put her at ease: hunters were vicious people who hunted humans.

“Kiriko-san, you know, right? How much Seina-kun is worth right now.”

“I see.”

Those people were likely concealing valuable personal data that they had illegally collected, and this was what they are trying to do: steal it.

“But you wouldn't say ..... that you're not interested in Seina-chan either, would you?”

To eliminate any possible sources of uncertainty, Kiriko decided to tease Elma just to be sure.

“Well, as someone who has been asked out on a date, I am curious in many ways.”

“Huh!”

Her voice was calm, but her face was clearly agitated. Kiriko's shock was obvious, and it was a shock to those who knew her.

“Haha. As soon as we met, he said it felt like we'd met somewhere before.”

“No way! There's no way Seina-chan could do that with such finesse!”

Kiriko's agitation reached a breaking point and her speech began to sound like that of an elementary school student.

“Is that…?”

Kiriko looked so upset that Elma couldn't help but smile.

"Of course, even if Seina-kun doesn't have that intention, if he’s willing, we could still negotiate, right? After all, he's the man of the moment right now."

“Negotiations… I won't allow that!”

“I feel the same way.”

“What?”

"Because Seina-kun's personal data belongs to Airi-sama, so there's no point in fighting over it now, is there? And if that's the case, there's no point in making an enemy of Kiriko-san, is there?

“……”

“In my opinion, it would be more beneficial to eliminate the risk of strange leaks.”

“Um, hmmmm… well… that's true…”

Kiriko had a habit of being naturally tolerant of people who liked Seina. However, having seen Seina shunned by others more often than not, this was something Kiriko had no choice but to do.

"I'm sure there's no problem as it is now, but... some human hunters are cautious, so could you please tell me how they differ from Seina-kun?"

“Eh… yeah, I guess so.”

She skillfully extracted information about Seina's characteristics from Kiriko.

“Haha. But… there is some personal data that can only be obtained by collecting it directly.” Elma muttered softly as she saw Kiriko off.

It was a strange sight.

Kuramitsu Mikami and Widow were sitting opposite each other on the sofa.

“Please.”

Ringo, who placed tea in front of the two and stood behind Mikami, was quite shaken. She had attended many VIP meetings under Seto… but…

(I haven't seen such a strange sight since… well, since Washu-sama and Seto-sama's meeting.)

“I really wanted to know why someone like you turned yourself in.”

Ignoring Ringo's nervousness, Mikami spoke calmly and abruptly.

“Seina-kun does attract bad luck, but why did you turn yourself in instead of being arrested?”

“Oh, I've been caught. Kuramitsu Mikami.”

“?”

“Today was the first time I ever felt scared.” With a dreamy look on her face, she began to speak.

“Do you understand? This is me. I was so scared I almost wet myself...” The saint-like woman uttered obscene words.

Mikami was drawn in by the sight.

“I felt the greatest humiliation and pleasure I've ever felt before. From that moment on, nothing else had any value to me.”

The power of words… you might say. Ringo was overwhelmed by the vibrations of that voice, which could even be felt as a physical force, her face flushed red, and her body trembling. Her absolute presence was exactly what you'd expect from a human like Seto.

“…It sounds like you have feelings for Seina-kun…”

“No way! That child destroyed my world, trampled on it, and violated it.”

“Do you hate Seina-kun?”

“He's just did to me what I tried to do to him. I can't hate him. It would be ridiculous to do so.”

“Does that mean you don't feel guilty about what you've done?”

“It's not strange for the strong to steal from the weak… There's no point in me explaining that to you now, right? Kuramitsu Mikami. But I am aware that according to your rules, I am insane. And so the reason I'm here now is because I lost.”

“You could have easily escaped, but you turned yourself in.”

“Run away? Why? My old life is no longer worth anything?”

“So that's what you were caught?”

“For me now, value is knowing that the child who scared me continues to exist, and being with him…”

Her words suddenly reminded Mikami of the report she'd read earlier.

“!! Could it be… the seven dead bodies…?!”

“Since you guys were about to overlook it… I wanted to reduce the harm to that child even just a little… Well, I guess I could just buy a little time.”

She spoke of the seven murders as if it were no big deal.

“I see… but… if you want to meet the next condition, isn't it strange that you're here?”

“Being in the same world as that child means following the rules of that world, so it's not that important.”

“…Your own… death?”

“Haha. That child really made me feel so good.”

The joyful expression on her face was so beautiful it could be described as the height of sensuality.

“……”

With a deep sigh, Mikami leaned back in her chair.

“Are you finished with your questions?”

“You’ll be asked plenty more questions.”

“I mean private matters. I have given the person in charge detailed records of the incidents I was involved in, so I have no intention of answering meaningless questions.”

“That goes for my questions too, right?”

As she said this, Mikami quickly read through the detailed document submitted as evidence.

“Kuramitsu Mikami is different. If you’re like me, we’ll be able to communicate, so there’ll be no pointless discussions.”

Her detailed records were a kind of household ledger. How and what would bring in how much profit… but as a report, it was also perfect. It would be impossible to produce something as detailed as this, even if they questioned her in person or made full use of all the investigations up to now; it was a textbook… no, it would not be an exaggeration to call it a bible. But at the same time, it was also incredibly merciless and nauseating. That's because most of the income portion of the income and expenditures were people's lives.

“I could make a fortune with this report.”

“Please add it to my assets and put it in the victim fund.”

However, her approach was thorough. Unless the lawyer was extremely incompetent, it should be possible to eliminate almost all secondary victims who would be eligible from receiving compensation. Yes, with Ringo behind her, it would be a piece of cake.

(Is that why you asked her to stay?)

With a heavy sigh, Mikami turned to Widow.

“Can I confirm this again?”

“I was captured by Yamada Seina.

Without waiting to hear everything, she answered without hesitation. She was told that half of her vast wealth would go to Yamada Seina as a bounty.

“Seina-kun… I really don't know how to deal with you.”

“To be able to remain so pure in the midst of that bad luck is… yes… he’s a lethal weapon.”

“But that's something only people like you can relate to.”

“Heh heh.”

Mikami felt that she was almost divine as she smiled in agreement. She hesitated to say the next thing. But only for a moment, she remembered the report and realized once again who the person before her was.

“That concludes my questions.”

The termination of the questioning was, in a sense, a death sentence.

“Well then, good day.”

But for Widow, it was as if that was nothing at all, and she stood up with a satisfied smile on her face. Her sentence was carried out three months later.

“Whew… what a pain.”

Airi leaned back in her chair in the president's office and breathed a big sigh.

“Master Guard is still occupying the system, and the scramble is ongoing. A major hunt is underway in City 773…”

(The only good news in the midst of all this was that Widow had been captured…)

“You're telling me, you turned yourself in so easily?”

Mikami had sent her a transcript of her conversation with Widow, but she didn't feel like looking at it right then. However, she sensed that something had happened with Seina.

“Kukukuku… go die… I'm not giving him to you.”

At that time, Amane was on her way to the third predicted point.

Although she hadn’t found him yet, she was definitely following in his footsteps.

“I've got to hurry.”

Amane, with her keen intuition, noticed early on what was happening in the city.

“Damn! I knew this would happen.”

As she hurried down an alleyway taking a shortcut, Amane's bracelet started making an annoying ringing noise.

“…Oh dear, I can't just ignore this.” She had no choice but to answer the GP emergency call.

“Oh, I'm glad I caught me! Amane, actually…”

From a familiar operator, she learned that Seiryo was chasing Seina.

“So, what do you want me to do? Besides, that's not within my jurisdiction, since I was demoted.”

“Please don't be mean. We're busy and short on manpower.”

“All right, all right. Since we have the same goal, I'll catch him for you.”

“Thank you. Due to emergency call-up, Amane will be granted the status of second-class detective.”

“Hohho… chance!”

“What?”

"Roger that. Now, let's see who is responsible for the terrorist activity and stalking of the urban base....."

“Oh, Detective Amane! You're still a material witness. A material witness!”

“It seems the battleship that crashed is the criminal's personal property?”

“The theft has been reported…”

“It's a lame excuse like a kid's.”

“Amane Second Class Detective …… you want him to be the culprit no matter what.”

“No questions will be asked when you interfere with official business!”

Amane's words had some merit. If he took a large number of students and crashed a battleship into the base of the city, and although there were no fatalities, he further exacerbated the chaos…

“If you try to harm a student, I will shoot you.” Amane gleefully held up a rifle of a caliber that could have obliterated him with a single shot.

“If you lay a hand on my Seina… I'll kill you.”

It was a confusing line, but Amane's exact feelings were that she wanted to get rid of a hateful carnivore that was harming her favorite soothing little animal. Well, at this stage it was probably more accurate to say that she treated him like a pet.

“Kill two birds with one stone♡”

“But wait a second. Currently, second-class detectives are not allowed to use firearms while acting alone!”

“There should be no restrictions on teachers when it comes to protecting students.”

The operator, sensing the excitement in her voice even over the phone, concluded that any attempts at persuasion were futile.

“I'll leave that to your judgement…”

“I'll do my best.”

“Please avoid firing as much as possible.”

“I'll do my best.”

“If possible, in a revivable state...”

“I'll do my best.”

As she ran off with a smile on her face, Seina appeared in front of her from the alley.

“Seina!”

“Ah, Amane-san.”

“?…Who are you?”

Amane felt something was off about Seina's expression as he smiled at her.

“W-Who am I? I'm Yamada Seina…”

“Hmph. Do you think I'm going to fall for that act?”

A hint of murderous intent rose within Amane.

“I understand. I surrender... This is exactly the same pattern as with Kiriko-san. And I just learned about Seina-kun's characteristics...”

“What a mess, get on with who you are!”

“Well, I guess that can't be helped, Amane-san.”

But at that moment, someone was watching the two of them.

“Damn you!”

The disguises that didn't work on Amane were too much for Seiryo.

“Don't touch my Amane with your filthy hands! Don't even look at her! And don't even smell her and get your wild lust going, you caveman!”

Seiryo, who had completely misunderstood the situation, came out with words that were tantamount to rubbing Amane's skin with sand.

“Die!”

Amane quickly took out a large-caliber, high-power rifle and pointed it at Seiryo…

“Argh!”

No… She slammed the brutally shining, heavy barrel of the gun into Seiryo's face.

“Good job, good job! No complaints here. Wahahahaha...”

Amane, with a ruthless expression of rage, beat him up with such relentless ferocity that it seemed as if she was going to mince him. Although he was protected by a Guardian, he didn't have a strong sense of danger and Amane's anti-guardian system caused a fair amount of damage.

(Wow… Amane-san… you must really hate Seiryo.)

Elma was so shocked that she just stared at the two of them in shock, still disguised as Seina.

“Hey, hey, Amane! I know you’re happy to be saved by your future husband after being attacked by a caveman, but that’s a bit too intense an expression of affection.”

Well, he said something so stupid that it's hard to even describe.

Flap, flap, flap!

An incredible murderous aura emanates from Amane, and birds within an area of several hundred meters take off all at once.

“Die!”

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Amane fired her rifle at Seiryo. Even though it was blocked, it was the same as being hit by a 200 kilogram hard ball.

“The finishing blow! ... Wait, what?”

Elma supported Amane, who collapsed like a puppet with broken strings.

“That's a bit excessive.”

She interfered with Seiryo's guardian, took advantage of the opportunity when its abilities were weakened, and put him to sleep.

"Well... considering Amane-san's guardian abilities, she can only be kept asleep for 30 minutes at most... so it would be best to disarm her and leave her with Seiryo-san..."

Seiryo was lying on the ground covered in bruises.

“Even though she hates him, if I did something like that, I'd be afraid of the retaliation that would come later. But I have no choice… Here goes!”

Elma shot something at Seiryo, who was lying on the ground, then kicked him into a nearby irrigation ditch, then turned to Amane, who was lying in the bushes.

“If that's the case, we have to hurry.” Elma's eyes glowed suspiciously.

“I knew we should have come here first.”

On the lower stage in the square, women were dancing almost completely naked in traditional costumes.

“The drinks and food are free. And…”

“Hehehe. Once midnight comes, there will be a huge dance competition in the square, open to the public. This is your chance to see those ladies up close!”

Wearing paper bags with strange poorly drawn caricatures on them, and drinking coffee through straws, the two of them looked strangely excited, attracting the attention of those around them and passersby on the street a short distance away.

“……”

Seina looked down in embarrassment and saw a waterway running under the latticework floor. The cool breeze coming out of it felt good on his flushed cheeks.

(…Oh dear… Ugh!!)

Seina sighed as he listened to Kenneth and Rajua still having fun, then he noticed a figure (Seiryo) floating in the canal.

“Ke, Ke, Ke… Kenneth, Rajau!”

“Shut up. We're getting to the good part, so don't interrupt.”

“But! There’s someone in the waterway below!”

Pulling on Kenneth's sleeve, Seina pointed down.

“He’s just some drunk, it's fine”

“He was face down! How can it be okay?”

“Seina, it's not uncommon for drunk people to fall into waterways, and we have an automatic rescue system.”

Kenneth and Rajau held down Seina's shoulders as he tried to stand up.

“But!”

“That's right. It would be more troublesome if you rushed in and caused secondary damage.”

“Well, it's just the thing to cool your head.”

“Oh, that's clever.”

Just as the two-person comedy routine concluded, the dancing girls passed the baton to the

dancing men.

“Ugh!”

Kenneth and Rajau quickly turned back to the table.

“Hey, Seina, what's wrong? You look worried.”

“Isn't it cold to treat someone else like that?”

“It's okay, he's been rescued and is at the hospital by now.”

“But.”

“Without an emergency system in place, I would naturally try to help and see if there was anything I could do.”

“But when someone is like that…”

“Seina has a point. I'm sorry.”

The two of them bowed their heads obediently.

“Ah, no… I said too much… sorry.”

“It's okay, it's okay”

“But, Seina. I don't know about other places, but at the Academy, rescue techniques like that have advanced quite a bit. So when trouble like this happens, it's sometimes necessary to just ignore it.”

“Huh!?”

"They get excited and tend to become onlookers."

“You may not know this, Seina, but when we first introduced this system, the people who showed up often ended up hindering rescue efforts.”

“Someone like Seina, who has a biased probability, seems like an easy victim of collateral damage.”

“Ugh!”

What Kenneth said was certainly true.

“No one around is making a fuss, right?”

“…Y-You're right…”

Although several people were pointing at the floor, none of them, nor anyone around them, tried to get up from their seats, which Kenneth said was normal. However, because the

security of the entire city was down, Seiryo was not rescued, and because of the nanomachine virus that Elma had shot into him, Seiryo only regained consciousness when he was being played with as a ball by a large dolphin-like sea creature about 30 kilometers offshore from the city.

(Huh?)

Amidst the hustle and bustle, Seina noticed a sudden murmur from far away, the source of which was unclear.

(Is there another event procession approaching?)

However, Kenneth and Rajau continued talking without seeming to notice at all.

“More importantly, Seina, was that a pretty girl that was drowning?”

“Huh?”

“I was more interested in that than the sexy ladies' dancing, so it must be something I like…”

“It was a man!” He answers angrily.

“Hmm… Hey, Seina, do you have a girlfriend on Earth?”

“What? Why are we talking about that?”

“He acts like he's not interested in girls. I wonder if he likes girls.”

“Th-that's…” He turned bright red and stuttered.

“Hmm… so you are interested in women.”

“It's not normal to be more interested in a man than a sexy woman.”

“You see, the person from before was drowning…”

“Yes, safe and sound!”

"Geez... What about Kenneth, rather than me?"

"Me? Not me. I'm always looking for new people. Just kidding."

“What about Rajau?”

“I don't either. I guess it takes me a long time to fall in love with someone…”

“Hahaha. That's why you risked your life to escape, in search of new encounters.”

“I see.”

“Your chance to meet your soulmate may be just around the corner…”

As Rajau spoke, the same noise from earlier came closer.

“Found you~!”

“!?”

There stood the source of the people's murmuring.

“Ah, Amane-san…”

With a plunging neck line and deep leg slits, Amane's outfit was made to exaggerate her beautiful figure. Drawing the attention of the crowd, Amane approached Seina.

“Bad boy. It's past lights out.”

With her soul-melting beauty and electrifying voice, she instantly transformed the room.

(Wow, what a provocative outfit. I wonder if Amane is even aware of her role as a teacher?)

Kiriko was anxiously watching the situation from behind the bushes just behind Seina and his friends. In fact, she had been there since before Seina and his friends arrived…

(What on earth are they doing? Please hurry and come and collect this guy…)

Next to her was the human hunter who had been lying in wait for Seina and the boys, slumped over the table, seemingly asleep and drunk.

The city was currently in chaos due to a fierce intelligence battle and a major accident at its base.

Normally there were plenty of ways to escort a criminal, but because of the chaos, most of them were out of service. Of course, Kiriko could escort him, but after finding Seina, she couldn't afford to lose him again. More than anything, the situation before her was just as dangerous as a natural disaster. She couldn't imagine taking her eyes off him for even a second.

(If I take the culprit to Seina-chan... No, that's not okay!)

--Kiriko, you can't just leave someone with a boyfriend in the corner. What's more, what are

you going to do if you get him drunk? -- That's what Amane would surely say.

(This is no joke! I can't let Seina-chan misunderstand! It's no laughing matter for a guardian to have bad behavior, and doing so would alert the people hunting Seina-chan. What's more, if there were an abnormal situation where several top-class professionals were killed, it would be even worse.)

At that time, Kiriko didn't know that there was only one murderer, that the culprit had turned herself in, or that it was Widow. So in the end, all she could do was feel her irritation growing in front of Seina.

“Oh, you… you really know Amane-san.” Kenneth was in tears with excitement.

“You know… I did the interview in the dorms, right?”

“Well, well, that's true though.”

“You didn't believe it?”

“It was just information they got, and it wasn't something that was actually reported like .....Seina.”

“Amane-san is a very famous top model, and it's hard to believe that you know someone like that.” Even Rajau seemed excited.

“Hey, you three! What are you whispering about?” Amane, who felt left out, sulked and clung to Seina.

“It's cruel to leave me out.”

“No, that's not what I meant…huh?”

Seina instinctively stepped back and noticed a familiar perfume.

“Huh? I feel like I've smelled this perfume somewhere before…”

“Eh!“ Amane quickly stepped back.

“Oh no… I'm in trouble. I've already worn this with someone else. This is popular right now.”

“Oh… I see.”

“But Seina! Even if you notice something like that, you should keep quiet.” She moved her sulky face closer.

“S… sorry.”

“By the way… why don't we move to another place? We can't have a proper conversation here.”

When he noticed, he was being looked at with intense jealousy and envy from all around.

“Uh, yeah…”

“Or maybe… you prefer the risqué ladies dancing on stage to me?”

She pointed to a female dancer who came onstage to replace the male dancer.

“Of course it has to be Amane-san!”

“Yes! Yes!”

Kenneth and Rajau stood up, holding Seina under their arms.

(Are they moving?! That's bad!)

Although Kiriko saw the three boys leaving the store with Amane, she couldn't just abandon the arrested criminal, and her frustration reached a critical point.

(…or better yet.)

When Seina and the others disappeared from sight, Kiriko's anxiety reached its peak, and she glanced at the man, thinking of something extremely dangerous - and at that moment,

“Uh…um…” A trembling voice came from behind Kiriko.

“!”

When she turned around, she saw a GP member standing a little distance away from Kiriko, half hidden in the bushes, with a pale face.

“Sorry for the delay,”

“Thank you for your hard work. I will pursue my next goal, so please continue.”

“Um, and then…”

“I'll hurry, so please take care of this!”

With that said, she ran off like a rabbit after Seina and the others.

“Well, then… the murderer in question was caught…”

The voice did not reach Kiriko, but the GP member was unable to chase after her.

—A large carnivorous animal about to tear its prey apart.

That's how the GP member described Kiriko's condition during his report.

(Thank goodness, there he is!)

Perhaps because it had only been a few minutes since she had lost sight of them, Seina and the others were easily found.

(Although, since Amane is with them it won't be that hard to track her down.)

The famous Amane created ripples of excitement wherever she went, like walking around with a siren blaring.

“She stand out even when she’sI do nothing… I wonder if she can be a detective?…Huh!?”

Just as she was muttering this, she noticed that there were indeed people chasing Seina and the boys. Being conspicuous meant that it was easier for them to attract human hunters.

(I see… that might be perfect for an undercover operation.)

“Kiriko.” At just the right time, Gyokuren spoke to her via subspace communication.

“Are you ready?”

“As expected of Seina-sama. Most of the remaining targets are gathered here.”

“And Karen?”

“I'm here.”

Although she couldn't be seen, Karen seemed to be following at a discreet distance.

“Okay, thanks for the help Karen.”

“I don't know if it's easy or hard. What on earth is that, all these people…” Karen must be annoyed at this absurdity. It was rare for her to complain.

“Kiriko, there are two targets and five suspicious people on the list.”

The data was sent to Kiriko's eye monitor. She glanced at Gyokuren's data and current situation, and instantly created a plan.

“Karen, Gyokuren, I’ll send you the plan. We’ll start working on it in a minute.”

“Roger that.”

“…I hope the target is among them.”

(As long as we can capture the dangerous person who killed a top-class spy, we can leave the rest to Gyokuren and pursue Seina.) Kiriko thought

“Hey Kiriko, did you hear she got caught?”

“Huh!?”

“Okay, let's get to work!”

“OK!”

“W-wait a minute!”

Chapter Six: Human Hunting

It was a quiet street, far from the hustle and bustle of the festival and Kiriko and her teams' clandestine struggle.

Amane led Seina and the boys down some narrow stairs to the basement of a multi-tenant building. At the top of the stairs was a small garden-like entrance decorated with beautiful monuments and plants.

“Come on over here.”

As they made their way around the garden they came to a small, doorless entrance obscured by trees.

“Whoa…”

Seina and the boys bent down slightly to go inside and saw a spacious room that was far larger than could be imagined from the outside.

Inside the restaurant, a round table covered by a roof of illuminated plants was surrounded by a ring-shaped sofa, creating a private room, with steps between them to prevent them from interfering with each other.

The interior of the restaurant was stylish and had a very adult atmosphere that made the three boys feel completely out of place.

“Wow, amazing.”

The way they entered looking around curiously was like saying, “We are children.”

“Oh, is that Amane-san?”

They realized that Amane, who was supposed to be walking ahead of them, was nowhere to be found. It seemed that they had lost sight of Amane while they were distracted by the scenery inside the store.

“This way. Just follow the directions below.”

At the sound of Amane's voice, they noticed a faint glow in the hallway.

“Oh, hey Seina… look at that!”

As Seina was about to start walking, Kenneth spoke to him in a voice that sounded almost like a snort.

“Huh!?”

He pointed to a seat a little ways away and Seina could see the inside of a private room lit by candles, where a man and woman who appeared to be a couple were passionately kissing.

“Ohhhhh… over there too!”

Turning towards the sound of Rajau's trembling voice, he saw that there too, in the private rooms surrounded by blind-like ivy, where you could almost but not quite see, couples and multiple pairs of men and women were in the middle of some adult fun.

“Shh, be quiet. Don't make too much noise.”

Amane appeared without anyone noticing and, with a lustful look in her eyes, pressed her forefinger to Seina's lips.

“Come on, this way.”

“No way… Amane-san brought us here…”

“Y-You mean, suddenly there are four of us?!”

Kenneth and Rajau followed Amane, wriggling and squirming strangely.

“……”

However, as he followed the two of them, Seina felt something was off.

“This is the last one.”

Karen returned to the GP's mobile police armored vehicle carrying the limp man.

“No doubt about it. Operation complete! Now, leave the rest to us.”

“No. As the operations chief, you have reports to make.”

As Kiriko tried to run away, Gyokuren grabbed her hand.

“Let me go, Gyokuren! We have to find Seina-kun!”

“Seina-sama? Now that I think about it, he was with Amane Kaunaq earlier.”

“Yes, that's it, that's it!”

“So he's safe now?”

“He's not safe!”

“Huh?”

Gyokuren and Karen exchanged curious looks.

“He's accompanied by a woman dressed in a provocative manner that is unbecoming of a teacher! Of course it's dangerous!!”

“Oh, then he should celebrate.”

"What are you talking about, you idiot?”

“Haha, actually I wanted to tell you.”

Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes were moist.

“Huh!”

“Kiriko, Amane Kaunaq would be better. If you leave it to Gyokuren, there's no telling what she'll teach them.”

“Oh, how rude. If you train yourself properly from the basics, you can attract any woman…”

“Are you planning to turn Seina-chan into a shady male ninja?”

“Calm down, Kiriko. Besides, Amane Kaunaq isn't the type of person to do something like that on her own, is she?”

“I think there's a good chance if Seina-sama asked for it.”

“Ugh~~!!”

“Gyokuren, don't make unnecessary comments! Come on, you'd better hurry back or something bad will happen.”

“Oh no! If anything were to happen to Seina-chan, how would I apologize to his parents?”

“This is annoying! Just say he’s become a respectable man!” Karen finally got fed up and said.

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahh …

Kiriko, who was on the verge of collapse, was dragged into the car by the two women.

Wistful sighs, whispered voices, the sound of clothes rubbing together, sweet smells... The things that adult men and women produced a dense atmosphere, and for the boys, it was like a powerful drug.

“Oh, Amane-san? What are you doing here…?”

Seina, sitting next to Amane, couldn't bear the tension and asked. Kenneth and Rajau were shaking with tension.

“Hehehe… We'll talk later. First, let's have a toast.”

“Eh… but…”

The glasses on the table contained an amber liquid with fizzing bubbles.

“Don't worry, it's not alcohol. Hehe, it makes you a little tipsy though.”

She lifted her glass and tapped it lightly against Seina's glass.

“To the boys who have entered the adult world… Cheers!”

As if enjoying the bell-like sound, they all made a toast with their glasses, and Amane gulped down her cocktail. They all forgot to pick up their glasses, their eyes glued to her beautiful figure.

“Come on, have a drink. It'll calm you down.”

“Y-Yes.”

At Amane's request, Seina picked up his glass.

“Here we go.”

“…Ah…Yes.”

Perhaps feeling a little relieved by Amane's gentle smile, Seina drank his glass in one go. Perhaps this prompted Kenneth and Rajau to also empty their glasses too.

“Whew…”

The cold liquid and the stimulation of the carbonation calmed Seina and the boys' minds, if only slightly.

“Okay, one more.”

As Amane said this, a new glass was sent over.

“Ah, Amane…”

“What?”

She placed her hand on Seina's knee and brought her face closer.

“…Ah, Amane-san?… Somehow… the atmosphere is very different from daytime.”

Seina desperately tried to look away, trying to resist Amane's aura.

“What do you mean?”

Amane got closer and then moved her face even closer.

“Well… my impression of you is… you’re sexy, but you also have a cool, refreshing feel…”

Yes, from the outside it didn't seem strange to be in a place like this. But to Seina, it felt more like an tavern.

“Now it's …… no?”

“…Right now it's moist and sticky…that…”

“Hehe… then… maybe it's your fault, Seina.”

“Huh!?”

Unable to bear Amane's moist gaze, he looked at his glass.

“!!”

Suddenly, Seina's body stiffened with shock.

“Ahhhh, Amane-san?” He quickly pulled away from Amane.

Amane blew into Seina's ear.

“If you let your guard down, I'll attack you.”

The sight of her licking her lips was that of a beautiful carnivore. Her wet lips spread to the sides in a wide grin.

“Oh, Amane, are you drunk?”

“Hehe. I guess it's better to be drunk, right?” Amane smiled meaningfully.

Kenneth and Rajau's excitement reached its peak.

“Kenneth! Could this be…?”

“Ahhhhh, Aahh!!”

“Hey… What should we do now?”

She brought her face close enough to touch Seina's.

“Huh!?”

Amane's breath made Seina pull away in alarm.

“Are you planning something?”

She moved her body closer as if to chase after him.

“Um… I have to go back to the dorms soon…”

“No! There's no reason to go back! No reason!”

“Yes! Absolutely no reason!”

The two of them jumped in front of Seina, accompanied by the sound of colorful paper bags rustling.

“Well then, I guess I'll have to ask you to go out with me……

“Yes! With pleasure!”

In an instant, the hood of the circular sofa covered it as it sank into the floor.

“!?”

Gas was ejected with a whoosh.

Seina and the others' bodies went limp and their consciousness faded into darkness.

“Why… why are you here?!”

Kiriko was stunned at the human hunting and capture headquarters.

“I got here before I knew it.”

There, standing there with a smile on her face, was Amane, whom she had seen earlier in town.

“What happened to Se-Seina-chan?”

“That was a mistake… I was distracted by that idiot and got knocked unconscious by the fake Seina.”

“A fake?! Wait… It can't be Elma!?”

For Kiriko, one piece of the jigsaw puzzle called chance fell into place.

“Elma? Haha… so Elma disguised herself as me and took Seina away.”

“Elma… you tricked me…”

Her brow was furrowed and her fists were tightly clenched and trembling.

“Hahaha, she got me.”

“This is no laughing matter!” With that shout, Kiriko ran out of the headquarters.

In a basement room lit by a small spotlight, Seina and his friends were sleeping wrapped in a transparent, gel-like substance.

“……?”

The three of them regained consciousness at almost the same time, but it was Yamada Seina who was the first to realize what had happened and sat up.

“Seina-kun, you've noticed…”

A figure spoke to him from the darkness outside the spot.

“Amane…W-Where am I?”

“Your reaction and understanding skills are quite good, but… you really are the unlucky one, Yamada Seina.”

“What is this… Amane…?!”

As Amane entered the spot, a static-like image appeared on her body, the force field shell disappeared, and Elma appeared.

“Amane-san?”

“Don't be too surprised. It's just a force field entity with a pseudo-personality program.”

“You?”

While Seina and Kenneth looked shocked, Rajau looked at Elma with sparkling eyes.

“She's beautiful. ……”

“Don't you recognize me?” Her tone was a bit sad.

“???”

However, in the midst of all the confusion, Seina's vision did not immediately connect with his memory.

“So……” Elma snuggled up to Seina like a cat and rubs her cheek against his.

“Ngagh!”

The one who was most surprised by this was Rajau, not Seina.

“??”

Though he was skeptical of Rajau's reaction, the new information about touch brought back vivid memories for Seina.

“Ah! That time… in the Academy corridor…”

It was the Wau woman who had nuzzled Seina.

“Good. It seems you remembered.”

“Seina-kun! What is your relationship with this beautiful woman?” Rajau, who had been frozen until then, suddenly came close to bump into Seina.

“Even if you say relationship… we only met once…”

“There's no way she'd rub cheeks with someone she met just once!”

“What? Cheek rubbing…” Seina, not understanding what was going on, looked at Elma for help.

“Well, I guess it's a tribute to the hero who defeated the pirates.” Elma also smiled in a troubled manner.

“Um… I'm sorry, but…” Kenneth, who had been silent up until then, began to look around and said. “Could this be ……?”

“What are you talking about, Kenneth-kun? It's obviously human hunting. Right, beautiful person?” In contrast to Kenneth, Rajau was smiling broadly.

“Huh?! Yes, that's right, human hunting.” Elma smiled wryly.

“Huh?! Human hunting?!” Kenneth suddenly began crying next to a surprised Seina.

“Ugh…”

“Oh, what's that? What's wrong? I didn't mean to say I was hunting humans.” Elma frantically tried to comfort him, but…

“Uuh… I thought I was so lucky that my first partner was Amane…”

It seemed that the argument was quite off the mark.

Elma, with a troubled look on her face, led Seina and the boys through a dimly lit underground corridor that was like an aerial gallery, with a huge, complex structure. Seina and the boys were still restrained, and behind them were the figures of suspicious men in white lab coats. Kenneth kept his head down, sniffling every now and then, while Rajau, with his cheeks flushed and his steps looking pleased, walked closely behind Elma.

(What's …… here?)

Completely different from the ultra-futuristic city on the surface, this place was a construction site… no, it would be more accurate to describe it as ruins. A large amount of water leaked from somewhere and sometimes it looked like a waterfall, and in some places it accumulated in an underground lake, and moss and grass were growing around the tree that bore the glowing fruit that had taken root there.

“Hey Kenneth, what's a human hunter?”

“Well, sniff…, basically, it's about catching test subjects for human experimentation.”

Seina stopped in surprise at those words.

“Human experimentation?!”

Then, the men pushed him hard from behind.

“Don't stop!”

Seina started walking again.

“Wahhaa! Seina-kun, you don't need to be so scared. The human experimentation is actually done in a very advanced simulation, so it's not a physical experiment but a collection of personal data. So the experiments are not necessarily physical, but rather to collect personal data to be used in the experiments.” Rajau, smiling broadly, interjected.

“Personal?”

“It's like Amane-san's appearance earlier..... ugh .....” Kenneth continued, crying.

“Ah…”

Even when he saw it up close, he couldn't believe it wasn't her.

“Ha ha ha! We're going to use that data to conduct simulated human experiments.”

“But even if you're just collecting data… it's going to be used in weird ways like what happened just now…”

In fact, Seina and his friends were tricked into being here.

“It's okay. You won't die.”

“It's good that we were the ones who caught you. If they're bad people, who knows what they'll be used for… you know.” Elma gently stroked Rajau's head as he followed closely behind.

“Yes yeeeees ♡” Rajau's cheeks turned red and his eyes started to sway unsteadily.

“Well, boys who wander around at night deserve what they get into.” She turned forward and started walking again.

“Ah… Seeing how excited he is makes me feel stupid for crying so much… Hey, Seina, it seems like you know that person… Who is she?”

“…I believe she is Chairman Airi's secretary…”

“Eh?! She's such a talented person…I see…” Rajau interrupted their conversation and looked at Elma with glazed eyes.

It felt like he fell in love with her all over again.

“He said that earlier, but isn't he the type who falls in love easily?” Kenneth spoke in a low voice and Seina nodded silently.

“Elmaaaa!!”

Just then, Kiriko burst into the bar where Seina and the others had been like a hurricane, knocking down trees and monuments.

Kiriko used all of her information networks, including Jurai, Seto, and the Academy, to find the location in just a few minutes.

“Seina-chan, Seina-chan!”

Kiriko's loud voice caused those involved in affairs to run away like rabbits, or hide under tables, or groan in ecstasy at the slightest bit of trouble.

“Seina-chan, where are you?”

“Shut up!”

As Kiriko searched for Seina, a large man appeared before her, completely naked.

“!!”

Kiriko recognized the man. With his toned muscles and multiple large scars, the man was a martial artist who fought wild animals and combat robots.

"Humph! Did your guy run away from you screaming loudly? But look closely, you're a beautiful woman. Why don't I do something nice for you?"

The man grabbed Kiriko's shoulders and tried to pull her towards him.

“Hmph!”

Kiriko grabbed the man's hand and easily threw him.

“Gugh! Wh-what…ugh!”

Although he was thrown suddenly, as one would expect from a man who made his living from fighting, he quickly took a defensive position and tried to get up, but his movements suddenly came to a halt.

“Did you see Amane Kaunaq with some Academy students?”

It was like being a frog stared at by a snake.

“…Wh, what are you…” The man was so scared he couldn't move.

“Did you see Amane Kaunaq with the Academy students?”

“If it were those people, they would have been sitting there!” A woman pointed to a seat.

“Thank you.”

With that, she ran towards the seat the woman pointed to.

"Oh my God, what's wrong with you? You daredevil men are so sloppy."

“You've got to be kidding me! Compared to that woman, wild animals are far cuter.”

“What… Ahhh!!”

Boom! A loud crash and smoke rose from the seat where Kiriko had been, and she was gone.

“We'd better get out of here, too. We told that woman a lie.”

Separated from Kenneth and Rajau, Seina found himself in a pitch black space. From the echoes of distant sounds and the currents of air, he could tell that it was a large space, and from the small noises and presences of people, he could tell that there were many people there.

Then, Elma's raised voice could be heard from the side.

“Ladies and gentlemen, today we have a rare Earthling, the unlucky Yamada Seina who has accepted our invitation. Please welcome him with a big round of applause.”

A huge round of applause rang out and the lights in the venue all came on at once.

“!?!”

As Seina had expected, the large construction hall was filled with several equipment trucks and what appeared to be young researchers in lab coats cheering and clapping.

Then, Seina froze when he saw something rising up from the floor, making a low, bass-like sound.

“Now, since it's getting late and everyone wants to start their experiments right away, I'd like to move on to collecting data on Seina-kun right away.”

“Eh?! But…”

In front of Seina was a thick wooden chair, reinforced with black iron and sharp studs, covered in thick high-voltage insulators like those used in high-voltage power lines, with iron balls attached to the ends. It was more like an electric chair, or rather, a chair with an ominous look befitting a human experiment.

“Um… this…”

Ignoring Seina, who looked at her pleadingly, Elma snapped her fingers as a signal for the men to pick up Seina and drag him to the chair.

“Um, wait just a minute, Elma-san!”

“…for the sake of scientific progress… you understand, Seina-kun.” As she looked away, Elma spoke in a very scientist-like, egotistical way.

“Now, switch it on!”

With that signal, an incredible sound of electrical discharge began to reverberate.

“Hey, Elma!”

“Ten, nine, eight.”

A countdown began, and an electrically discharged hemispherical hat descended.

“Something's happening…”

“Seven, six, five.”

Several glowing lights appeared on the inside of the hat, which begin to discharge further.

“Elma! Stop it!”

“Four, three, two.”

Pappapa~~n!! Pappapa~~n!! Pappa! Pappapa~~n!!

Suddenly, the insulators on the chair exploded.

“Ugh!!”

Seina, who had been focused on the hat on top, cried out in surprise at the sudden sound and collapsed in the chair. Confetti and ribbons fell on Seina. And to add to the punchline, the evil hat directly above him also came off at the base and fell on Seina's face with a soft thump.

“Surprised?” Elma peered in, pleased with Seina's reaction.

“……”

A slightly teary-eyed Seina glared at Elma.

“Where's Seina-chan?”

Kiriko, soaking wet, came running back into the bar, jumped into the false passageway and was thrown straight into the sea.

“Damn you! You got away!!”

The bar was empty, with no sign of anyone. She ran to the back door that the people who had tried to escape the first time had used. But…

“No! This is not the time for this.”

Kiriko thought about looking for the woman who had deceived her earlier, but quickly changed her mind.

“Considering how long it's been since I last saw Seina-chan and the boys, the table that was empty a while ago seems suspicious…”

Kiriko began checking out the unoccupied candidates, relying on her memory from earlier and the state of the seats and tables.

“There are five candidates. I guess I have no choice but to go through them all.”

Saying that, she destroyed the table she had picked and jumped into the hole that appeared.

“Thank you for your cooperation.” Elma said to a pouting Seina as they walked down the hallway to the waiting room.

“…”

But Seina just ignored her, looking straight ahead.

“Hey, don't be so upset. It's just a small event. By the way, Seina, it was about the memory restructuring error.”

“Eh… why did you say that?”

“I just asked my friend in the other room, and sure enough, there were some errors in the numbers and symbols.”

“Is… Is that so?”

“Don't worry. There are specialists here, so we can put together a fix right away. Don't worry.”

“Thank you.”

“Just a little token of my appreciation for letting me use your personal data. But you're really unlucky.”

“That's right… Really… What bad luck.”

The dimly lit corridor was the perfect scene to make you feel depressed.

“I heard from Airi-sama… that it's always been like that.”

“…But this time, I'm a bit overwhelmed…” With that, Seina stopped and bowed his head.

“Hehe. Like I said before, I'm glad it was us.”

“Seto-sama told me that she welcomed my talents… but it was because of an installation error…”

“Huh?” Elma realized that Seina meant something more serious.

“…Could you possibly be… referring to inputting the jump coordinates?”

Seina silently nodded in response to Elma's question.

The probability bias was quite formulaic, due in part to the existence of a sample that could be considered psychic, so to speak, with Mitoto and Mihoshi at the head of the list. Elma did the math in her head, applying the numbers Airi told her to the formula for the disruption to his everyday life.

“What!!”

The numbers that were derived from this were met with amazement.

(…Oh no… How careless…) Elma regretted her foolish consolation.

The numbers she just calculated made her realize how much trouble Seina was in and how many opportunities he had given up.

(If the jump coordinates entered with the wrong numerical sense attracted the pirates, then .....)

Then if the installation error was corrected for, he would lose that ability.

"……Sorry."

"But I guess that's just me, hahaha. In the end, it's better not to have any talents that you have to rely on other people for."

"Seina-kun…" Elma felt that she was being comforted by him for the sad look on her face.

Correcting the installation error would mean that despair would turn into hope and then back into despair… He would have to extinguish the only light of hope that was lit in the darkness called despair.

(A boy younger than me who still has a hint of innocence about him is trying to accept it.)

And the amazing thing about him was that he still kept moving forward.

(A strong child… I see why Seto-sama of Jurai must be worried about him.)

She thought his innocence and pure healthiness was dazzling.

"You still have to learn to be properly competent and not rely on talent.....E, Elma-san!"

She licked Seina's face and gave him a cheek rub, a sign of a Wau's greatest affection.

"There's a saying on Earth that goes, 'turning misfortune into good fortune'. Your bad luck took you to a space you normally can't get to, and even allowed you to meet Seto-sama of Jurai."

"Yes, thank you."

"!!"

Elma was taken aback by Seina's flushed cheeks and happy expression.

For Seina, who had always been avoided by others, it was rare to find someone who spoke to him like Elma. Because he was not used to it, his reaction was pure, just like when a dog-lover or cat-lover saw the moist eyes of a puppy or kitten.

(Wow, so cute.) Elma trembled with a thrill similar to pleasure. (I see… so that's why Kiriko-san loses her cool when it comes to him.)

“Only four left! Seina-chan, wait for me!”

Kiriko broke the table and jumped in. Even though there was a better way, Kiriko didn't have the time to think of it at the moment.

“This is the waiting room.” Elma pointed to some large containers lined up at the back of the aisle.

“By the way, why were Kenneth and Rajau taken to a different room from me?”

“This is just another little experiment.

“?”

However, as Seina entered the waiting room, he noticed a moaning voice.

“Kenneth, Rajau!”

He opened the blackout curtains and jumped in…

“Wow, that's amazing!”

“Hey, hey, touch here!”

“Wait! Being young is so amazing!”

“Let me touch it too!”

“I'm first!”

Young female researchers in white coats gathered around Kenneth and Rajau, crowding around their lower bodies and making a fuss.

“Whoa!”

“Gwaaaah!”

Seina rushed to Kenneth and and Rajau.

“A-Are you okay?”

As Seina tried to run over to them, Elma hugged him from behind.

Shaking her head from side to side, “Don't disturb the experiment.”

“An experiment? What?”

Upon closer inspection, he saw that the two were being held captive by some sort of cat-shaped robot.

“It's an experiment on small stimuli and their reactions.”

“Kenneth… Rajau?”

“Argh! S-Seina! I'm not in pain so you don't need to help me! Gua—!!”

“Eh, Elma! I want your help, but I don't want to be helped… ahhhh!”

“That's awesome!”

“It feels so good!”

Seina shook his head and felt foolish for trying to help the two who looked so happy.

“…You guys look so happy…”

“Hehe. Would you like to try an experiment, Seina? Like this…” Elma hugged Seina from behind, pressing her ample breasts against his back.

“!!”

The expected reaction came through his body.

“Giggle.”

It was at that moment while Elma was enjoying the boy's nervousness.

“Elma! Please return to the hall immediately.”

“Damn, it was going so well…”

When Elma ran back into the hall, what she saw was researchers running around in a panic and equipment emitting white smoke and equipment that had shorted out and shooting sparks.

“…Wh-what?! What the hell happened?”

“Oh, Elma! I just created a pseudo-personification of Yamada Seina's personal data… and installed a correction program for the memory formation error…”

“So… then?”

“As soon as the installation was complete…”

“As soon as you did that?”

"...it broke through the isolation program, fell through a security hole, and was exposed to the outside network."

“……”

For a moment she felt as if she was dizzy and had fallen into the depths of hell.

“Elma, what should we do?”

“Could it be an outside operation?” Suppressing a desire to escape that was akin to sleep deprivation, Elma desperately tried to find a way to cope.

“No, there's no sign of it.”

“There's no way there's a hole in this security system. Unless someone accessed it from the outside… and that hasn't been breached in the last hundred years!”

“Moreover, it was physically isolated from the outside.”

“…… What?”

It felt as if her suppressed desire to escape had turned into a monster trying to break down the door to hery heart.

“Elma-san, there is a message from Chairman Airi.”

“Elma! What have you done?”

Before Elma could reply, a 3D image of Airi suddenly appeared, looking more upset than she had ever seen her before.

“What… what happened?”

(There's no doubt something terrible must have happened, even without hearing about it.)

“Seina's personal data was infected with a huge number of viruses, and he broke through the 33 Master Guards and broke into the Philosophy Department's data storage server!!”

“Wow…”

The content of the story far surpassed Elma's highest expectations. She instinctively covered her ears, she didn't want to hear any more.

“And then it instantly destroyed all the data and the mirror.”

“……”

It was the most surprising moment for everyone there, no... of their entire lives.

"The server was instantly physically disconnected from the outside world, but Seina-kun's personal..."

“He got away... didn't he?”

“Is Seina-kun still there?”

“…Yes. And his two friends…”

“Don't let them know. And all the festival participants will be detained and quarantined.”

Before Airi had even finished speaking, security officers stormed in.

“……I got it”

Seina and his friends quietly got out of the air car that had stopped in front of the dormitory.

Kenneth and Rajau were still wearing paper bags over their heads, but their excitement was palpable even through the bags.

Elma was standing next to the car. “Thank you for your cooperation in this experiment…”

Kenneth and Rajau, cheeks flushed, “No no, thank you.”

“Elma, I'm always available to help you.”

Elma got in the air car, “Yes… I'm sure I'll have to ask you again.” She smiled tiredly and closed the door.

“That's right, Seina… you have to… have confidence in your talents.”

“Huh? Yes… thank you.” Seina bowed his head.

The boys waved goodbye as the air car drove away.

After seeing her off, Seina and the boys passed through the dormitory gate.

“It was a really fun night. Seina was so excited…”

“It was amazing.”

Suddenly, surveillance probes flooded in front of them.

“Ah.”

“How is it?”

The new equipment was moved to one of Airi's workshops.

“They still haven't caught him… Well, thanks to that the Master Guard was killed and the large scale battle scramble was cancelled.” Airi said with a self-deprecating smile.

“I was thinking on the way back from dropping off Seina… I think Kiriko-san…”

“No.” She answered without any hesitation.

“Why?”

“Not as long as Kiriko-chan is against Seina-kun's stay at the Academy!”

“You don't need to be so cautious…”

"In an instant, the data on the Philosophy Department's server was destroyed. Considering how long it's been since the loss, it's certain to have an impact on the entire Academy. Plus, his involvement in the current large-scale battle and the arrest of so many spies. If this were to become public, even the Board of Directors would likely isolate Seina-kun...no, expel him."

"Could it be...that Kiriko-san could have orchestrated this?"

“When it comes to Seina-kun…”

“Isn't this a school of absolute freedom?” It was a slightly sarcastic expression.

“Officially, Hakubi Washu's hidden server was discovered, and it's being treated as the cause of the Master Guard malfunction.”

“Is it really from the legendary Philosopher?”

“That sounds convincing, right?”

“I guess that's just how it is…”

“Heh heh. I guess so.”

“It's amazing to think that someone who disappeared 5,000 years ago can still have this much influence today.”

“If this was the Academy when Washu-sama was there, they would never have expelled Seina. Although, I doubt he would have been a student.”

“Hahaha... But it's quite convenient to use when there's trouble like this... What would she say if she were alive?”

“It's okay! I got permission from the person in question.”

“Well then…huh?” Elma looked comically surprised.

“Um…what just happened…?”

“I got permission from the person in question so it's okay.”

“Aaaaah, she’s still alive?!”

She was shocked when she saw Airi's V sign, which she didn't understand.

“…Oh, by the way… there were rumors that Washu-sama was seen at the Academy recently…”

She remember it being introduced as an urban legend on a TV occult show. She didn't pay much attention to it because it was a low-brow show with third-rate gossip.

“Where is she now?”

“Are you interested? Well, of course.”

Airi laughed wryly as she watched Elma wag her tail like a puppy, as if it might break.

“You know…”

“Yes!”

The speed of Elma's tail accelerated even more.

“Find out yourself.

“Oh, no way. Airi-sama.”

“Heh. Don't look at me like a lost puppy.”

“Whine, whine.” With tears in her eyes, she clung to Airi.

“I… I mean, you’re cute, you bastard. But if it's no good, then it's no good.”

“Mee.”

Seeing Elma looking dejected, Airi struggled to resist the urge to hug her, rub her cheek against her, and take her home.

“Ugh… Well, I'll tell you something interesting because you're so cute. Do you know the Principality of Aliu and the Country of Kirmoi?

“Of course. Things had gotten so complicated that war was on the brink of breaking out, but the Galactic Federation intervened… or rather, Jurai and Seniwa threatened to intervene with arms together, and somehow managed to avert it just a few days before war… Even a child would know that. Does that have anything to do with you, Washu-sama?”

“The truth is, Jurai and Seniwa's declaration of armed intervention was not enough.”

“What?”

“So, Washu-sama summoned the heads of state of both countries…”

“Wh-what do you mean?”

“Many of Washu-sama's students have now become important people in various places. That includes those two.”

“But... even if Washu-sama is a legendary Philosopher, that kind of strained relationship...”

“It was amazing…” She looked up at the ceiling with a faraway look in her eyes.

“Huh?”

“Both of them were trembling in front of Washu-sama, almost to the point of wetting themselves…”

“…Ah…”

“Washu-sama turned her back on them and remained silent.”

“……”

“Two minutes and 37 seconds later, they were both on the ground… crying.”

“…So… then… it stopped?”

A cold sweat ran down her back – it was because she knew how strained the rifts between the two countries were. As if a unified nation would form on Earth right now and all borders would disappear.

“…I think I have a vague idea…of what kind of person Washu-sama is…”

“Usually she's a really kind and good person, but… when she's unforgiving, she can be merciless. From what I've heard, if you act tough or stubborn she gets really pleased… she seems to be really merciless.”

“I'll search on my own.”

If one relied on others, you never knew what they'd do when you actually met them.

“That's better.”

A researcher working on the project shouted loudly. “Airi-sama! Yamada Seina, we have him!

Seina's personal information image appeared on a large screen…

“…Wow…”

There, Seina was drunk and was in a completely changed state, with an incredible number of viruses following him like a ghost, and although they couldn’t explain in detail because it

would be controversial, he was unintentionally sexually harassing a famous idol companion CG girl.

"……"

Even Airi was stunned.

"…Ah…that's right. About the war we were talking about earlier…there was another reason." Airi finally muttered as she stared at Seina's image.

"Because Seina annihilated the pirates who were behind the two countries."

".....From now on...it's going to be challenging....." That was all Elma managed to say.

"So Elma just took your personal information?"

"They said they would dispose of it once the experiment was over."

Kenneth and Rajau, wearing bags on their heads, were talking to Kiriko on the phone. Of course, communication late at night was prohibited, so this was illegal access.

"Yes."

Kiriko breathed a sigh of relief.

"But Elma seemed to be very intimate with Seina, even rubbing his cheek."

"Huh?"

"That's right. Seina is really popular in other places too…"

"I'm glad I came to space, it looks like a lot of fun…"

As they were sharing their subjective and irresponsible opinions, Seina came out of the bathroom, wiping his face with a towel.

"I really can't get this off…" The mark was clearly visible on his face as he muttered.

(Hmm… Who are Kenneth and Rajau talking to?)

However, the display was hidden by Kenneth and Rajau's bodies and couldn't be seen.

"Oh, you came at just the right time." Kenneth turned around and beckoned to Seina.

"What? I didn't think we'd be followed on our way home."

"Hahaha, I let my guard down."

"But it was a lot of fun."

– – Yes, good for you.

It was a voice that sounded like it was coming from hell.

He reflexively turned towards the monitor where the voice came from.

“Ahhhhhh!”

What caught Seina's eye was Kiriko's expressionless face, like a Noh mask.

“K-K-Kiriko-san!!”

Seina froze involuntarily, because he could tell from the expression on her face that Kiriko was seriously, extremely angry.

“Kiriko-san… what is this…”

“It sounds like you had a lot of fun, Seina-kun.”

Immediately afterwards, Kiriko disappeared from the display.

“K-Kiriko-san!”

“Hey, wear a paper bag.”

Kenneth nodded.

“You shouldn't show that mark to a woman.”

As if the two people's irresponsible words had broken his paralysis, Seina collapsed to the floor, exhausted.

Chapter Seven: The Past: Kiriko's Case

“What's this… making people so worried…”

In the end, when she finally reached the hall where Elma and the researchers were, the security guards had already removed the equipment. She collapsed onto the low table, looking exhausted, and her soaked shirt stuck to her back.

“I’m sweating again.”

The feeling was so unpleasant that she stood up quickly, a complete change from the previous day.

“I'm going to take a bath and go to bed.”

She stripped naked right then and there, gathered up her clothes, and threw them into the washing machine. She passed through the kitchen and went down the stairs to the basement.

“Haaa…”

With a big sigh, she lowered her body into the bathtub.

The Japanese-style bath, carved out of natural rock and made from a cypress-like wood from Jurai, was so spacious and luxurious that it seemed out of place for the size of the house she lived in.

“Seina-chan is an idiot!”

She stretched out her shapely limbs as much as she could and shouted at the ceiling. Then, she took a deep breath and relaxed her body, and her limbs slowly floated to the surface of the water. A bath where she could stretch her limbs to her heart's content was the only luxury she could enjoy.

“…But… I'm glad you're safe.”

She sighed and reached for the glass of cold tea, which was covered in water droplets.

“!”

Kiriko suddenly glanced at her outstretched right hand.

“Hey... Don't you think that's terrible? We were so worried about you...”

She spoke as if someone were there.

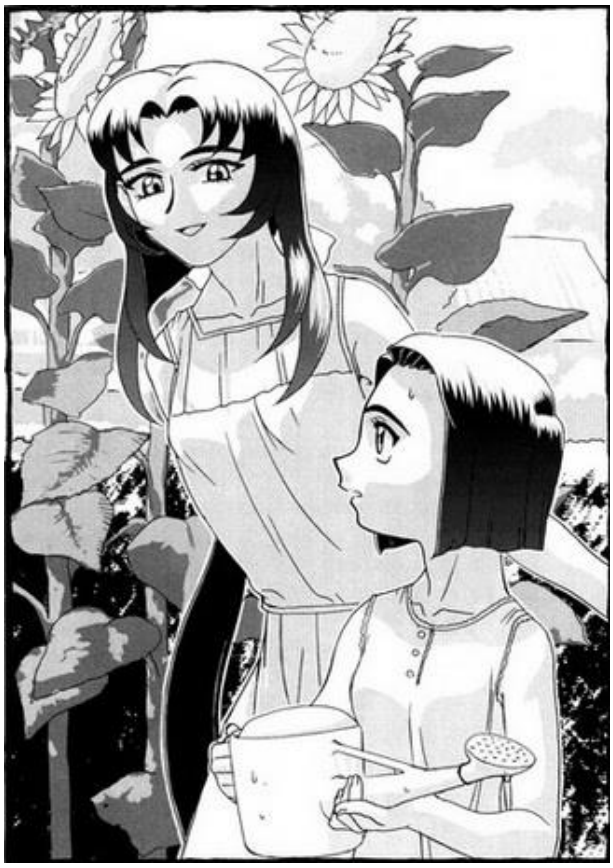
How many years had it been? Her days were so busy that she couldn't even tell what day of the week it was, let alone what month or year.

This was when Kiriko was still a young girl and didn't know who she was.

A beautiful woman whom she occasionally saw in the village, a relative of the main Masaki family, had spoken to her for the first time.

“Hello. You're Kiriko-chan, right? Nice to meet you, my name is Masaki Minaho.”

She had come to visit her mother.



In the living room, a woman named Minaho was having a casual chat with her mother. However, one thing that was strange was that her mother was using honorific language when speaking to this woman, who was obviously younger than her mother.

“Kiriko-chan is getting to that age now.”

It was only later that she learned that in Masaki Village, there was a ritual performed to inform children who knew nothing about it that they were aliens. In short, it would be foolish to simply convey the facts without taking advantage of such an appealing setting.

However, in Kiriko's case, it happened in a terrifying way.

The nightmare began with a phone call to Minaho that night.

“What did you say!?”

“Kiriko, take Kai and go to your room.” Her mother said with an unusually stern look on her face.

Kiriko left the room with a disgruntled Kai, whose TV show he wanted to watch had been cut short.

“You let the pirate get away?”

She could only hear fragments of the conversation through the sliding door, but judging from Minaho's tone, it sounded like something quite urgent was going on.

“So it's an assimilation type! That's why it's been able to escape until now. Well, at least now I understand... What?!” Finally, her voice rang out loud and plaintive.

“So, what is your decision, Seto-sama? …I see…”

The call appeared to have ended there.

“Minaho-sama?”

“Gather the village leaders and go to Father right away! I'm going ahead.”

“Understood.”

Kiriko felt uneasy at the tense atmosphere, so she took Kai to her room, quickly laid out the futon for him, and then followed Minaho.

“She’s gone!?”

But the silhouette of a mountain floating in the dimly lit sky pointed in the direction Minaho was going.

“The shrine…”

At dusk, it felt as if it were connected to another world... That was how she felt.

“An assimilation type biological weapon?”

Kiriko was hiding in the bushes at the back of the shrine office, listening to the adults' conversation coming through the window. This was the same blind spot where Seina had fallen off the mountain behind the shrine and gotten stuck, and despite an extensive search, he had not been found.

“Yes. Just a few hours ago, we captured a pirate ship within the solar system.”

“Not again… In recent years, there has been a sudden increase in cases of pirates approaching the solar system.”

(What is Katsuhito-sama talking about?)

The head of the family's story greatly confused Kiriko. However, the urgency of the situation made Kiriko think that it was not a made-up story or an act.

(I thought the Masaki family had some kind of secret… but I never expected… something like this.)

Kiriko had always felt something was off about the Masaki family and the village they lived in. Her appearance, which was not Japanese, and the villagers' behavior and speech were all subtle, but all of these things combined made her think that there was something different about the village.

“The organization we arrested this time was a group that Seto-sama had been pursuing for over a thousand years…”

“Those are the people who specialize in human trafficking and kidnapping.”

“How big must this organization be if Seto-sama has been pursuing them for so long and has not yet been able to destroy them?”

“The scale of the group itself is not that big, but no matter how many times we take them down and capture the ringleaders, a new organization is born.”

“The lower-level members with the know-how will create new organizations… It's a cat-and-mouse game.”

“No. Seto-sama believes it's the same person.”

“The same person?… So that's the assimilation type biological weapon!”

“A similar incident has been confirmed before. The destruction of a pirate ship from that organization, followed by the nearest station from the scene, a planet inhabited by life.”

“So that's where the next mastermind came from…”

“At a minimum, one person… at worst, a large area of a planet could be wiped out.”

“!”

A murmur spread throughout the room.

“The base organism assimilates plants within a certain range, creating a kind of territory where it then assimilates and preys on animals and insects. When all life in that area is gone, it parasitizes other animals or uses rivers or wind to move to its next breeding ground. In the case of the mastermind, interstellar travel is necessary...”

“If it gets a spaceship soon enough, it will be one person, if not, it could be a mass extinction.”

“It seems that it generates a spaceship using the energy of absorbed living things.”

“That's a tricky one. But you were able to find out a lot in such a short time.”

“The individual cases were linked and the entire follow-up took just a few minutes.”

“Thanks to Seto-sama's intelligence… I see, if it was a biological weapon of that nature, it would most likely find its way to the nearest habitable planet, Earth.”

“Fortunately, it appears to have been a prototype, and it has been confirmed that only one unit was produced in this generation.”

——!!

At that moment, the only ones who understood the meaning of Minaho's words were Katsuhito and Kiriko, who was listening outside.

“Fortunately… I guess. In some cases, it could mean the destruction of the entire Earth.”

As Katsuhito spoke, Kiriko jumped out from the bushes where she had been hiding.

“Could that be… Kiriko-chan?”

It was then that Minaho and the others first noticed Kiriko's presence.

Kiriko was riding her small scooter along the mountain road, which was now completely dark.

Kiriko rushed out of the shrine and tried to hurry to Seina's house... but even taking the mountain route, it was nearly three kilometers to Seina's house.

“I won't make it on my bike!”

At that moment, she remembered the scooter parked at the foot of the shrine stairs.

“Okay! It has the key.”

Since it was in the countryside, the key was left in the lock.

There was no way that Kiriko, an elementary school student, had a driver's license. But her mother taught her how to drive a scooter just in case something happened.

“Seina-chan!”

Suddenly learning the secret of her family lineage—but even more than that, it was the flesh-eating monster that made Kiriko uneasy.

For some reason, this was directly connected to Seina, and made Kiriko extremely anxious.

And that premonition became reality when she arrived near Seina's house.

“Wh… what?”

A lush rural landscape…but it had turned into a strange otherworldly place.

“The croaking of frogs...”

The croaking, which should have been as loud as a swarm of cicadas, was completely silent. Kiriko then realized that she had entered the territory of the man-eating monster.

Something moved, and Kiriko could sense it heading toward her.

(Don't move!)

Whether it was instinct or a rare quality of Kiriko's, she turned off the engine of her motorcycle and stood frozen in place, motionless.

—??—

The presence seemed confused, but then it found new prey.

(Seina-chan!?)

A small figure came out of the kitchen door of the Yamada house - and started moving

toward Seina.

“No!”

Kiriko threw down her scooter and ran after it like a rabbit, recklessly grabbing hold of it.

Kiriko felt an unpleasant, slimy sensation in her right hand.

—A strong physiological, instinctive aversion.

“Ugh…”

She felt so scared she wanted to vomit, but Kiriko didn't let go.

“Seina! Run…!!” Kiriko, trying to warn Seina, exclaimed.

She lost feeling in her right hand, and it was wriggling and deforming into an impossible shape.

“Eee!!”

Two eyes appeared in what had been her right hand… and then a long, horizontal hole resembling a mouth appeared.

—Haha.

It certainly laughed. And the next moment…

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!” Kiriko screamed, but no one heard her.

Kiriko's free left hand covered her mouth with tremendous force. Her instincts told her that Seina must not hear that voice.

(I need to get out of here) She started to walk unsteadily, trying to get away from Seina.

The nails dug into Kiriko's cheeks…but she was fighting a fear that was even greater than the intense pain.

—Haha.

To make matters worse, Kiriko's own face appeared on her right hand.

It gradually grew larger and approached Kiriko, absorbing her right arm, and then began to speak to her heart.

——Hey, do you like that guy?

(I need to get away from Seina)

——Yes, his name is Seina.

(I have to get away…)

――Why? You like him, don't you?

(I have to get away…)

――Then let's be together. In body and soul… with him.

(Get…away…)

――That child is mine.

(……)

――That is my sacrifice… My flesh and blood.

(…That's not it…I exist…for…Seina-chan's sake.)

――What!?

(I will protect Seina-chan!)

It was this feeling that sustained Kiriko's spirit. And it was this feeling that saved her.

――Gyaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!!

“Huh?”

Along with the other Kiriko's death throes, the weight she had felt in her right arm suddenly disappeared - or rather, her right arm was severed near her shoulder.

The last image she saw before losing consciousness was of Minaho holding a glowing sword and another Kiriko with a look of shock on her face as the sword was thrust into her.

“The captured target has been identified as a core, but just to be sure, we are conducting a detailed scan of the area around the crashed ship it was aboard. However, no abnormalities have been detected within a radius of 50 kilometers so far.”

“Thank you for your hard work. But you managed to stop the assimilation process… you're quite the woman.”

One is Minaho…who's the other one?

“Oh, are you awake?”

“!”

As her consciousness became clear, the nightmare-like sensation came back to her.

“No! Noooooooo!!” Kiriko screamed.

“It's okay. It's okay.”

She spoke to Kiriko gently and powerfully. That was how Seto and Kiriko first met.

Kiriko suddenly looked at her right hand. The regenerated right hand was the same as before, no trace of the amputation was visible, and there were no more aftereffects of the nightmare. But sometimes Kiriko talked to her right hand.

“What should I do?”

At that moment, it felt as if it was speaking to Kiriko - the desires inside of her - as if it were her own true self.

If Kiriko had accepted it at that time, she wouldn't be here now. She would have been killed by Minaho… No, Kiriko's mind would have died the moment she was assimilated by it. Her strong will slowed down the speed of assimilation. But Kiriko accepted the foreign object as a way to overcome the nightmare.

“What should I do?”

She spoke to her other self - she told the other Kiriko her true feelings - and Kiriko rejected it.

Suddenly, Kiriko activated a midair monitor and called up the surveillance system for Seina's room. She had suddenly become concerned about Seina.

“…Seina-chan?”

Seina was still unable to sleep.

The other two were already sleeping peacefully with the paper bags still over their heads, but Seina couldn't sleep and kept tossing and sighing.

“Seina… don't you know?”

This was not Earth. Even sleep could be easily controlled. Kiriko accessed the system in Seina's room and sprayed a relatively harmless sleep-inducing fragrance. Seina, who must have been quite tired, immediately began to sleep peacefully.

“Oh yeah, we need to get rid of that mark too.”

She iInstalled the program that removed that mark. The royalty fee was high, but with Seina's bank balance, it is not even a measly sum.

“Tomorrow is going to be a tough day. Get some rest.”

The mark disappeared from Seina's face, and Kiriko looked at him peaceful sleeping face

with joy.

“Heh heh… Cute.”

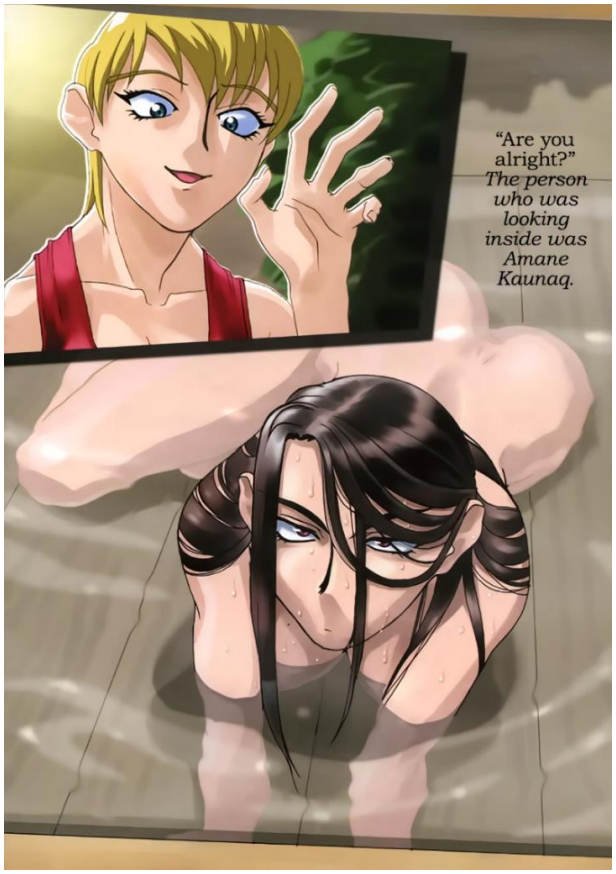
“Heh heh… Cute.”

Suddenly, a voice echoed from behind her.

“Kyaaaahh!!!” Just when she had let her guard down, Kiriko was startled by a sudden voice from behind and dove headfirst into the bathtub.

Clang! She hit her head hard on the bottom and floated up, half drowning.

“Cough! Cough cough cough cough!!”



“Are you alright?”

Peering in was Amane Kaunaq.

“……”

“Oh dear. You look like you have a lot of questions to ask.” Amane smiled brightly.

“Yes, too many to count.”

—That's how it always was with Amane. She would show up when she wasn't wanted, when she didn't want to see anyone, and just make things more complicated.

“First of all, I want to know how you got in here.”

“Airi-sama gave me the security code.”

“So… what brings you here?”

“I was asked to cheer up a coworker who was feeling gloomy and lonely.”

“So you came here to tease me.”

Veins began to appear on Kiriko's temples.

"No one would say no to being given Shinju Tree Sake." As she said this, she proudly showed off a small bottle the size of a vitamin drink.

“Ugh…”

Based on past auction examples, even that amount would be enough to buy a small continent.

(I guess no matter what I say, she won't go home.) Kiriko held her head in her hands as she saw Amane's big smile.

“Okay then… let's go to the living room.”

Amane was leaning her elbows on a round, old-fashioned low table, gazing at a bottle of Shinju Sake, while Kiriko was deftly preparing some simple snacks in the kitchen adjacent to the living room.

“Hey, why don't we just drink it in the bath?”

“Drinking alcohol is strictly prohibited in my bath!” Kiriko put the tray down on the table with a thud.

“Tsk.”

Muttering to herself, she poured ice and Juraian fruit liquor into two glasses, then added a dash of Shinju Sake for flavoring. Of course, if she drank it undiluted, it would be gone in an instant. However, the other fruit liquor Amane had prepared was tasteless and odorless, but if she mixed in just a few drops of something else, it had the property of making the aroma and flavor feel hundreds of times stronger.

“Yup… smells good.”

Amane took a deep breath of the sensual aroma, gazed dreamily into the glasses, and handed one to Kiriko.

“I've tried a few of these knockoffs, but the real thing is different.”

“Haha, I guess so.”

Kiriko was surprised to find that many copies of Shinju Sake were made, which was sold at auction to the public. Many copies of Shinju Sake had been made from the sake that had been released to the public through auctions. Of course, this was because of its rarity, but there were rumors that Shinju Sake, made from the fruit of the Royal Trees, which has supernatural powers, was a miracle drug of immortality, or that it gave supernatural powers. This was also the reason why Shinju Sake fetched an exceptionally high price at auctions. Of course, there had been similar copies before then, but the fact that the real thing had leaked to the public led to explosive sales, and even more dubious copies were born. Today, there are two types of copies that are the most popular. One was the company of the successful bidder of Shinju Sake, and the other is made by..... Jurai.

(Minaho-sama… you have quite a strong business spirit.)

“So let's celebrate Yamada Seina-kun's safe arrival and enrollment at the Academy…”

“I don't approve of it.”

“Geez… don't pour cold water on me right from the start. I'll leave it to you, cute stalker.”

“Don't say nasty things to people!”

“So what about a cute bucktooth turtle?”

“Are you here to pick a fight?”

“It looks like you're feeling better.”

“I’m angry!”

“Well then, cheers♡”

She clinked her glass against Kiriko's, which was still on the table.

“Oh my God!”

Kiriko was annoyed by Amane's behavior, but she was still very interested in the light pink liquid, so she picked up the glass and took a small sip.

“It's delicious… but is it okay?” Kiriko asked, nearly captivated by the intense stimulation that greeted her five senses.

“What?”

“But it's Shinju Sake. It's the kind of sake that you normally wouldn't be able to drink in your lifetime, so don't open it just like this. Save it for something more important to you…”

“Now is a good time.” She smiled broadly and raised her glass.

"I was basically asked to encourage Kiriko."

“You're not asking me to drink this with you, are you? This drink alone would buy a town or two.”

“That's so luxurious! Yes! It's delicious!”

She emptied her glass while laughing loudly. There was no sense of waste. Her carefree lack of material desires spoke of her good upbringing.

“But don't you think Airi-sama is worth it? For Seina-kun?”

“I won't be persuaded.”

“Is he really that cute?”

“That's right! You don't know how much Seina-chan has suffered because of that bad luck!”

“Shall we just lock him away in a safe haven?”

“Huh!?”

“Hmm… Just like my dad.”

“It's different in your case! This is a matter of life and death!” She raised her voice, trying to shout over the clinking of glasses... but.

“Hey, give me your glass.”

She took Kiriko's glass and started mixing the Shinju Sake and fruit wine. The timing was perfect, and it was a perfect lack of harmony, whether intentional or accidental.

“So? What was the story?”

By the time a glass full of cocktail was placed in front of Kiriko, her enthusiasm had completely cooled.

“That's enough. It's a waste of time telling you.”

In the end, the most important thing was to convince Seina.

“…More importantly, what do you think of Seina-chan, Amane?”

“What do you mean?”

“Seina-chan came to my house wearing lipstick.” She glared at her with a murderous look in her eyes.

Kiriko wasn't aware of it herself, but she was a little scary.

“Ahaha... That's right. But I had no choice, I had to give him CPR... Oh, or are you angry because he got caught up in the impact of the landing?”

“Why? I want to know if you did mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.” She was calm but spoke with an unusual intensity.

“Ummm… well… well…” Amane had been stammering, and suddenly her eyelids became heavy, and she collapsed to the floor.

“Don't try and fool me!” She shook Amane roughly by the shoulders but there was no response.

“Hey… Amane? What's wrong… Ah…”

Thud - Kiriko also suddenly lost consciousness in the same way. By the way, the cause was obvious – it was due to the new type of nanomachines that were added to the Shinju Sake that Airi gave her…

And at that moment, multiple rings of light started spreading like ripples from several places

on Kiriko's body. The light was so faint that it was almost impossible to see even in the dimly lit room.

“Seto, Kiriko-chan, it’s 10-34.” Minaho, who was the only one on duty at the operator's seat on the Mikagami Bridge, also known as the bowl, looked back.

“Oh, that's rare.”

A beautiful blue sky was projected into the normally pitch black space, and Seto, who had been having a tea party with the other night shift operators, stood up.

“What's the status of her Guard program?”

“Everything is frozen.”

“And that girl?”

“Probably... Oh, Seto-sama, it's from Washu-sama.”

Without a moment's hesitation, the image of Washu appeared in front of Seto. The operators who had been having tea all stood up and bowed in unison.

“No need for formalities. Continue on.”

“Hey Washu-chan. Kiriko-chan has been put to sleep. What do you think?”

“It's quite a masterpiece. It even froze our prototype.”

“Oh my.” Seto gave a rare look of surprise, if only briefly.

“Should we take this opportunity to activate the new Guardian?”

“…Hey Washu-chan. Do you know who set this up?”

There were only a limited number of people who could break through Hakubi Washu's Guard and do something like this. This was not a question, but a confirmation.

“Judging from the way it's constructed... Airi-dono, I guess.”

“Then let's disable the Guardian system. I don't want her to know yet.”

“That's tough, as expected from Jurai's Demon Princess. But Airi-dono has really come a long way.”

“So it was worth becoming Washu-chan's apprentice.”

“But it's still in the experimental stage because the functionality is unstable.”

“Using Kiriko-chan for experiments... Seems like you’re serious about this, Mother.”

“I wonder if you're planning to use it on me after all, Airi-chan.”

“Do you have any idea?” Washu asked, amused.

“Not at all!”

“Considering that, it seems like she's pretty serious about it. Based on the development forecast, it seems like it's a perfect fit for Seto-sama personally.”

“Could it be that the reason is because Seto-sama dressed her in a cute frilly dress while her mother was taking a nap the other day? What's more, she showed the stolen video at a Galactic Federation Council entertainment event.”

“Well, I guess it can't be helped. It's her fault for posing happily in the mirror after waking up. I couldn't let an opportunity like that pass me by!”

“Poor mother… she must be in shock…”

“Minaho-chan looked shocked when she said, “Mom, you're cute”, with a straight face.”

“Why am I being targeted for retaliation?”

“Oh dear… I don't care who is hated or what, so I don't care.”

“I don't care…Washu-chan, that's mean.”

“Well, the first target is obviously Seto-sama, and there’s a good chance she’ll pull a prank on Minaho-san too.”

“Why… Why am I the one being targeted for revenge??” She felt like crying a little.

“Her actions are based on whims, momentum, and unreasonableness.”

“That's true, but…”

“I've always wondered how someone can be a Philosopher.”

“It's a means to make injustice possible. There have been many failures so far, but if that weakness disappeard…”

“What if it’s gone?”

“The birth of a new legend.”

That meant she was equal to or better than Washu, that's how good she is.

“Ugh… that's right. This is no time for comedy routines! Hey Washu-chan, how long will it take to put together a Vaccine Guard?”

“It's a pretty good effort award… Why don't you just laugh and try something?”

“We'll do it!”

Seto groaned with a sulky look on her face.

“I'd say about an hour, with a 2% decrease in information processing at Seto-sama's place...”

“…Oh my, this really is an award for hard work.”

Washu's words seemed genuinely surprising to her. That was because that figure would force the halting or modification of 30% of intelligence activities being carried out across the galaxy. Of course, there were plenty of preventative measures in place, so this was assuming things continued as they were.

“If they are scattered as a distraction during the prototype stage, the effective period in actual combat will be… one day for Jurai class, and three months for others, at least.”

“Wow… Mom gets the Fighting Spirit Award.” Minaho exclaimed in admiration.

“……I have no choice. I'll take the bait. Minaho, please.”

“Huh!?”

“The higher the goal, the better. I don't want her to be satisfied with this. But, I guess giving her a little treat will be a good way to motivate her, right?”

“Kukukuku. It all depends on how you say it.”

(There's no point in arguing.) Minaho sighed, glancing back and forth between Washu and Seto.

“By the way, Seto-sama, what are you going to do with Kiriko-chan?”

“That's true…”

“Oh, let her sleep. I think it's for Seina's sake.”

“Really?”

“Actually, Airi-sama contacted me a little while ago.”

With that said, she began to explain the situation.

The victims were enjoying a brief period of rest, ignoring the intentions of the various strategists known as troublemakers.

However, this moment of peace only lasted for a moment, and the next morning would see another period of turmoil.

[Tenchi Muyo! GXP Volume 2/End]

Afterword

Sorry for the long wait everyone. Here is the second volume of GXP.

I wish I could release the books at a faster pace, but I've been busy with my main job, so the schedule has been delayed. This incident has made me give up (or at least prepare myself) on a lot of things, so from now on I'll aim to release the books at shorter intervals.

…And now, after making you wait, or should I say after making you wait… I think those who have read the main story were a little surprised. (…To be honest, I was surprised too.)

Not even a day has passed between the end of Volume 1 when Seina arrived at the GP Academy dorms and the end of Volume 2!

Well, at most half a day… In terms of the TV version of GXP that aired a few years ago, it consists of only the fifth episode.

The TV version of GXP was a story that took place over a period of about two years from the first episode to the final episode, but since it was only possible to include the bare minimum of stories from enrollment to training and graduation, a lot of episodes were omitted. Therefore, as explained in the afterword of the first volume, this novel version of GXP was written with the intention of showing various parts that could not be shown or depicted in the TV version!

So, when you supplement those parts with novels, it's strange. That's how it turned out this time~~hahahaha.

No matter how much I write and write, various characters just keep popping up and the night never ends for Seina-kun!

“In reality, the night ends without fail, but why does the night at the Academy remain night forever?”

I'm yelling in my head about how I'm bothering my neighbors, but it's my own fault, so it just makes me feel empty.

Sniff.

I tried to hold back the urge to cry… Oh, by the way, the sniffling wasn't due to tears, but due to hay fever. I was finally defeated by the pollen, which is said to be 30 times more intense than last year.

“I'm a newcomer who debuted this year♡”

Despite enduring the damage from their murderous self-deprecating remarks and the occasional sneeze and runny nose, Seina-kun and his friends somehow managed to make it back to the dorm.

Fortunately, my hay fever is still mild, and the sneezing and runny nose I was suffering from while working was caused by riding around on my bike without a mask, without realizing that I had hay fever. Well, it's 30 times worse after all… Since I started wearing a mask when going out, I hardly ever sneeze, even indoors.

However, because I can no longer open the windows for ventilation, the two computers and monitors, one for general use and one for drawing, are raising the temperature inside the room just right. Outside, the night breeze is cool, but the little devil called pollen is flying around… The reproductive behavior of the cedars during their mating season is causing so much trouble to so many people…

—So does that mean that the pollen information in recent weather forecasts is predicting whether or not their reproductive activity will be intense?

When you think about it like that, it seems kind of funny.

“Many cats are in heat today, so you will hear a lot of noise at night. Please be careful and bring earplugs when you go to bed.”

Is that what you mean?

But even so, masks these days have really good performance… They're light, don't hurt your ears, are airtight, let out moisture appropriately, and let in the smell of the outside air. I'm impressed that “necessity is the mother of invention” is a good example of this, and I wish they had a small valve-shaped hole so you could put a straw in when drinking something…

Now, getting back to the topic at hand, let me give you a preview of the next volume.

The exact length is impossible to predict, as there is the example for the second volume, but the current plan is to cover the story from Seina's entrance ceremony to living with Amane and the others… Probably.

I've been thinking about a lot of things, such as Seina's school life, which wasn't depicted much on TV, and the battle between Hakuren and the other four who came after being encouraged by Seto, Tatsuki Ringo's ladies-in-waiting, and Kiriko.

Masaki Kajishima